


A MIDDLE-CLASS MAN

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CHAPTER I

At last the high-school boy, Jürgen Kolbenreihner, made up his mind that if another car went by before the church clock struck five, he would go in and buy the book he wanted . . . Word of honour ?

Word of honour ! he said vehemently to himself, and read the title of the book again. It was a work of philosophy. His hand, holding the money, was wet. His eyes constantly wavered from the book to the clock-face. The minute-hand was just on the hour.

A car swept round the corner, passed the bookshop, and was gone. The clock had not yet struck. Jürgen made as if to go in. ,

Hesitating, he stepped back again. What will father say if I buy it ? . . . And what would he say if he knew that I want to buy it and haven't the pluck ? . . . Would he smile contemptuously if I suddenly made up my mind and went in ?

He continued to struggle with himself, his fingers clenched together in front of him ; he read the title, watched the long hand of the clock make a last spring forward. Coward ! Miserable coward ! he cursed himself, and felt his will turning to thin mist behind his forehead. The phantom of his father was standing beside him.

The clock rasped and struck. The mist vanished.

And Jürgen thought: I can still go in. But it must be at once! . . . Did the bookseller smile? At me?

The bookseller was standing at his door, looking with an air of boredom across the well-kept gardens, saturated with sunshine, where a revolving sprinkler made rainbows as it watered the grass.

I can't go in as long as he's standing in the doorway.

The bookseller yawned and stepped back, still yawning, into his shop.

Now! . . . If I can't pluck up courage now, life will go on doing as it likes with me in the future. That's quite certain.

At that moment there came in sight by the church a schoolfellow of Jürgen's, Carl Lenz, the son of a professor at the university. Of course I can't go in now, thought Jürgen. He went with Carl Lenz into the gardens and stared absent-mindedly at a nursemaid. Her starched skirts swelled out all round her, and the smart, well-sprung perambulator moved without a touch of her hand down a smooth-rolled gravel-path past a bed of tulips.

Close behind the perambulator a little girl in a short frock, with fresh-coloured face proudly uplifted, reined in her hobby-horse so spiritedly that she exposed her long, bare, finely rounded thighs. The group stopped suddenly as the baby, kicking in the perambulator, stretched out its hand for the doll that was hanging out of its reach.

Shaking her curls, the little girl acted the restrained impatience of her horse, as she pranced spiritedly on the spot. With chest thrown out, she looked past a ragged, starved, anæmic, working-class boy who had strayed from the manufacturing district into the sunshine and, the drama of poverty in his face, was staring open-mouthed at all this wealth.

Jürgen could not take his eyes from the boy, and it was

only when he felt himself observed that the boy could wrench his eyes from the wonderful little girl. He looked up, darkly questioning, at Jürgen, who felt himself suddenly permeated by a feeling he had never experienced before, and said to Carl Lenz : " We ought to be rebels."

" Why rebels ? For the sake of that little squirt ? "

The boy looked down at his black, ill-nourished legs and then shamefacedly up at Jürgen, whose own personality had been submerged again beneath the grin of his schoolfellow. When Carl Lenz entered a confectioner's shop, Jürgen went home perplexed. With bowed head, he climbed the carpeted stairs.

The house was oppressively still. Jürgen sat in his room without moving, a blue exercise-book in front of him, pondering the question of whether there was a God or not.

Suddenly the twilight was full of the bright faces of his schoolfellows, grinning mockingly. And his aunt said : " No, very few children nowadays are so lacking in character as you are. How unfortunate for your father !

Given up to these phantoms of contempt, he allowed himself to be tormented, tried to counter with : But yesterday I said to the scripture-master : Abraham can't have been a good man if he was going to sacrifice his own son. What a terrible father ! And I don't think God ought to have ordered him to do it.

His aunt asked in astonishment : What ? You dared to say that ?

What the master had actually replied was this : " How did you get hold of such an improper and criminal idea ? " But Jürgen immediately turned him into a defence against his aunt, and made him say : Your nephew often has these surprisingly original ideas.

His aunt said delightedly to his father : Then he's not a disgrace to the family at all.

And his father said: Forgive me for calling you an ignominious nonentity. . . . How can I have treated you with such contempt and indifference? I can't understand it. . . . Jürgen smiled modestly.

The door leading into the passage from the adjoining room, the library, was opened. Jürgen heard his invalid father, who was sitting there in his armchair, say to Herr Philippi, an old friend of the family: "I shall have to put him in the Civil Service. A little, shrivelled stipendiary magistrate or something of that sort. That's all he's fit for. He's loutish, unreasonable, and unfitted for life."

In his humiliation, Jürgen turned his head and shoulders to one side, as though he were standing in front of his father, and lifted his eyebrows till his forehead was sewn with wrinkles.

"No one knows what potentialities there are in one so young. No one can take the measure of an immature mind," said Herr Philippi. His spectacles gleamed in his dried-up, vulture-like face. He thought: You measured the soul of your wife with a foot-rule till her spirit, with all its capacity for suffering, died like a sick bird. But he did not say it.

Jürgen's aunt accosted Herr Philippi in the passage. "How is he? How is my brother?"

"Unreasonable, my dear." Herr Philippi tried to walk coldly away.

She caught him by the sleeve. "How comes it that a man of his distinction has such a son? We are ashamed of him. . . . His father said to him to-day: 'We'll put you in an office. That's the best thing for you.' . . . And I quite agree with him."

Herr Philippi looked angrily into the hard eyes of the elderly spinster, and stared in silence, as though he were counting them, at the twelve black question marks care-

fully curled with hot tongs and pressed flat against her forehead and temples. "I suppose you will bring him up if your brother dies? . . . Can I speak to Jürgen?"

"Yes; I shall bring him up. He's just writing his essay: *The Importance of Ink in the Service of Commerce*. You can't speak to him now. The time-table must be adhered to strictly."

She prepared for a long talk. "Listen. When he was quite a little boy, Jürgen was so timid that he dared not even speak. We all thought he'd been born dumb. One day—it was at the poultry-market and he was four years old—he said suddenly: 'Chickens.' That was his first word. Not 'Dada,' like other children. Oh no. 'Chickens,' he said, and called them, 'Chuck-chuck-chuck-chuck,' going like this with his forefinger and thumb. . . . Would you ever have believed it? Such a complete lack of character! . . . He's exactly like his mother. She was unfitted for life. She was afraid of mice—I'm terribly afraid of mice too—but once, when we caught a mouse, she cried for hours because we had it drowned."

She glanced up at him expectantly; he was holding her by her crochet-work collar. He shook her vigorously, and said: "Chuck-chuck-chuck-chuck! Good-bye."

She looked resentfully after him, and, going to Jürgen's door, listened for a few minutes with a severe expression. Jürgen was seated with burning cheeks at the table, writing in his exercise-book—for no other paper had been handy—a long thesis, with many arguments, to prove the non-existence of God. "Consequently I am an atheist." Not till he had finished did he force himself to write the essay required of him.

On the Monday he gave the exercise-book to his German-master, who found the arguments for the non-existence of

God, and sent them to the master responsible for religious instruction.

The matter led to a staff-conference and would have had serious consequences for Jürgen had not his aunt appeared abruptly at the end of the conference-table and disrupted the circle with the words: "Herr Kolbenreihner has had a stroke! . . . My brother was a most distinguished man." Her hand wandered round and was sympathetically shaken.

"But you gentlemen must have patience with his son. . . . Perhaps with patience and strict discipline we may yet succeed."

They promised not to fail her in that, and she was led out by the headmaster. "Jürgen's vacillating mentality . . . his lack of character . . ." The words came back to those still seated round the table.

"Consequently I am an atheist." The scripture-master opened his eyes very wide. "'I am an atheist,' he says. And yesterday that business about Abraham!"

The history-master calmed him. "Life will soon knock the nonsense out of the boy. I must say he's quick and bright at his work."

"Not with me," said the mathematics-master, holding up one hand. They went on to censure his extraordinary laziness, and the conference broke up.

In silence the headmaster shook Jürgen's aunt by the hand. Jürgen himself was standing near by, timid and unnoticed. Afterwards, drooping under a sense of guilt, he walked back beside his aunt's erect figure to the house, where the air was heavy with clouds of incense.

Towards evening she drew the crushed and will-less boy into the death-chamber, where his father, crowned with a wreath and surrounded with candles, was already lying on his bier. She crossed herself, and the movement ended in a gesture towards the face of the dead man.

"You've never given him a moment's satisfaction. And now you can never make up for it all your life. . . . Pray ! Three paternosters ! And then come and eat."

The whole weight of the house settled down on his bent back. The still candle-flames illumined his father's face, which was set in an expression of dissatisfaction, as though even death had disappointed him.

For some time Jürgen struggled with himself ; at last, with eyes fixed on the waxen face, he tried to touch the folded, lifeless hands. And recoiled as he fancied he saw the familiar smile of contempt.

Very slowly he knelt down to say the three paternosters. But he could not remember a word. His imploring hand went out to touch the extreme tip of the sheet. And sank back powerless.

The corpse lay untouchable, endowed with monstrous power.

Then a cog-wheel revolved in Jürgen's head, painfully, burningly, and threw out these words : Well, you ignominious nonentity !

"Well, you ignominious nonentity !" repeated Jürgen with contempt. His eyes wavered and his head and shoulders shrank to one side in humiliation, for he thought it was the corpse and not he that had said : Well, you ignominious nonentity !

He knelt in the room forlorn and unprotected, tearless, with twisted body, the power of the dead in front of him and behind him the power of his aunt.

"Now you're doubly an orphan," said his aunt, and took him by the hand and led him out.

Jürgen gave up trying to gain any control of his feelings. Into his dreams came threatening monsters from his violated soul. And with them was always his father.

When he was delivered from the torments of sleep, his

aunt received him, shook her head contemptuously, and gave him letters to take to the high-school masters, asking their forbearance towards Jürgen, who, unluckily, had not taken after his distinguished father.

In his habitual expectancy of further humiliation, Jürgen turned his head and shoulders to one side as Herr Philippi suddenly entered the room ". . . . That reminds me : I expect you are still under the impression that your father had a low opinion of you ? Even if that were so, you ought not to bear any grudge against him. He was old and sick and had lost his faith in goodness. A man like that often acts blindly and unjustly."

The boy's head had sunk deeper and deeper, as though it were his father that was speaking.

His father is dead, but his authority is still alive, thought Herr Philippi ; and lied : " I have a message to give you from him. I was with him shortly before his death. He was sitting in his arm-chair, you know how—sitting there just as usual looking out of the window at a swarm of birds that was flying past. . . . They were starlings," improvised Herr Philippi. " Suddenly your father said in a thoughtful voice : ' All my life I've been very unjust to my Jürgen. I wonder why. It's a puzzle to me '—really, he didn't know himself—' and yet I know quite well that Jürgen's a '—how did he put it ?—' a very fine boy and a very clever one too. . . . I must tell him that when I get an opportunity.' "

Herr Philippi managed to smile like a boy, as he went on to attempt to destroy the authority of Jürgen's aunt : " As for that old maid, your aunt, there's no need, of course, to worry about her. A dessicated old spinster like that doesn't know what she's doing. And that's the truth of the matter. . . . Come and see me some time."

. . . These aristocrats of the bourgeoisie say to them-

selves : " We don't allow our children to work or to starve ; we use physical culture, good feeding, higher education and money, plenty of money, to drive for them a broad, smooth road into life." . . . The psychic monsters they inject into their minds don't count. A boy like this is attacked by authority in all its forms, and though he reveals, as he builds his sand-castles, more intelligence and imagination than they've shown in all their lives, they rob his mind of its independence and then marvel at the lack of it. . . . Such were the old man's thoughts as he walked down the street. Meanwhile Jürgen was with his aunt.

She stood very erect, and as she spoke she looked out into the garden : " I heard it all. You have no time to go visiting Herr Philippi. Your schoolwork is more important. I'm responsible for your upbringing."

An automaton said : " A dessicated old spinster like you ! You don't know what you're doing. . . . And that's the truth of the matter."

She spun round horrified. Jürgen's mouth remained open in extreme fright. " What did you say ? Repeat what you've just said ! "

" It wasn't me that said it."

The conviction in his voice brought a look of disgust into her face. " Do you deny what I heard with my own ears ? "

Jürgen, convinced that he had not said those words, looked round with bewilderment in his eyes.

" I shall write to the headmaster about it to-morrow. And you shall give him the letter. And now—shame on you ! "

Not till his aunt had gone did Jürgen feel a few drops grow cold on his face, and knew that she had spat on him.

Several times his body grew rapidly hot and cold. He went to the window and stared into the garden. Coloured glass balls, as big as a man's head, reposed in dreary stillness on green posts. From the adjacent garden came

the sounds of Sunday afternoon. Disjointed words. Someone playing a concertina.

A wild cry stuck in Jürgen's throat. He raised his left shoulder, then his right; his legs moved rhythmically. These movements grew into a repressed dance.

Next morning, an hour earlier than usual, he crept from the house. His head was bent; he had left the letter behind. Suddenly he began to trot, broke into a run, galloped far out of the town, straight across ploughed fields, up hill and down dale, till he stood before the black mouth of a tunnel in the mountain-side and stared into it stupidly. He turned away and reached the classroom, sweating and panting but still in time, for the master was just tapping his desk with the end of a pencil.

The eyes of sixty boys met on that pencil, which, held upright in this manner, was a sign of some unusual event. The master prolonged the succeeding pause. Each boy was asking himself expectantly: Who's for it? Jürgen had a feeling that his heart was as big and round as a black moon and had stopped beating.

"Leo Seidel! . . . You know that unfortunately your father is compelled to take you away from school. On account of circumstances! . . . Your schoolfellow is leaving you to-day. He has to earn his living. . . . Leo Seidel, poverty is no disgrace."

The postman's son looked shamefacedly into his inkpot.

"Even a domestic servant can work his way up. . . . For instance, I'm told that that frequently happens in America," said the master, and smiled. "This morning you will stay in our midst." With a movement of his hand he indicated the whole class; then pointed with his thumb towards the door: "Thereafter you will enter your new sphere of usefulness."

Revolving sprinklers. Sunshine. Behind a smart per-

ambulator, a little girl, acting restrained impatience, rode her hobby-horse through the classroom. With open mouth Jürgen stared at a half-starved little boy of the working-class.

"Do you wish to say something, Kolbenreiherr? . . . Well? Out with it!"

A storm of excitement consumed all Jürgen's strength. He stammered with twitching lips: "I didn't want to say anything."

"Carl Lenz! . . . You were playing crook-fingers with Adolf Sinsheimer; now explain to us the principle of the block and pulley." A small model was standing on his desk. "No? . . . Sit down. Leo Seidel, explain it to him."

While the two exponents of crook-fingers fought out their duel at the back of the class and the master played with the little lead weights of the model, the solitary voice of Leo Seidel explained the principle of the block and pulley.

Jürgen suffered from a sense of cowardice because he had not spoken his mind. In imagination he shouted: It's all because Seidel's father's poor! That's beastly! Beastly! . . . Everything's beastly! He stared, almost out of his senses, at the master, till the latter called to him: "Kolbenreiherr, where is the block and pulley used?"

"Block and pulley?"

"Of course, block and pulley! Well? . . . Leo Seidel, tell him."

"On buildings, for example. A single workman with a block and pulley——"

"With the help——"

"——with the help of a block and pulley can raise a load ten times his own weight. Because of the transmission."

"Because of the transmission," Jürgen should have repeated; but what he said was "transgression."

The whole class was permitted to laugh. They were still laughing on their way home. All avoided Leo Seidel, for he might perhaps be pushing a handcart through the town next day.

Jürgen too, inwardly paralysed, did not dare approach him. But in imagination he went up to him, bold and chivalrous. I'm not afraid of what other people think. He enjoyed the homage that Seidel paid him.

At the midday meal his aunt ignored him, maintaining a dangerous silence. She sent the maid-servant to say that he must take the letter to the headmaster on the following day.

In the afternoon Jürgen summoned enough resolution to pay Seidel a visit. The basement living-room was filled with the smell of poverty, which made the consumptive postman's project to give his son a good education seem hopeless. Seidel was sitting quite still by the window, looking out into a stinking courtyard.

Shame and misery made Seidel turn his head and shoulders to one side, so that suddenly he resembled Jürgen, who at that moment was feeling free for the first time in his life.

He handed Seidel a History of the World bound in leather; he was able to joke: "It says in the Bible: Go, sell all thou hast and— But that's not why I'm giving you this book. I haven't the slightest belief in God."

The sallow-faced mother was lying in bed. Her baby, whose unwanted arrival had compelled Seidel's father to take him from the high school, began to cry. The wooden bedstead creaked. Four children, of various sizes, pale and anæmic, stood round big-eyed and motionless.

"Now you've got a splendid History of the World. Something to remember me by. You'll like it—with a hundred and thirty-seven illustrations."

Seidel said, without raising his eyes, that very probably he would soon have become the fifth in the class.

And Jürgen cried: "And simply because your father has no money you've got to be a servant, though you might have been a — cabinet minister. That's how things are. We may as well face the fact!"

"Good heavens! How you boys talk!" The woman spat into a bowl. "How you talk!"

Jürgen whipped himself into a rage: "Absolutely! It's terribly unjust! Disgraceful! Simply frightful! I don't care who hears me say it." On Seidel's cheeks, as well as Jürgen's, there were patches of colour.

The mother soothed her baby and said to the boys: "Lord, that's all absolute nonsense."

"Let us assume," said Herr Philippi, "that it was foolish from the very beginning for that consumptive postman with his large family to send his son to the high school."

"But Leo Seidel's so clever! . . . He might become postmaster. Who can tell?"

"Quite so! Who can tell? Many a blockhead becomes a professor; and many a wise man has to put a bullet through his head. That's how things are nowadays. And that's how they'll be for some time to come. One has to consider very carefully whether it is right to arouse hopes when poverty presents such an obstacle to their fulfilment. . . . One opens the door to various painful eventualities."

"All the same, I would help Seidel if I were you. You're rich."

Herr Philippi, with an old, experienced smile: "And I — I haven't the courage." Then, wavering between denial and kindheartedness: "You must go home now. Go home and put up with it all. Off with you!"

Jürgen's aunt went to the postman herself and retrieved

the History of the World. The following day a knowledge of the whole affair was imprinted on the faces of Jürgen's schoolfellows.

The boys moved up to fill the gap left by the absent Seidel.

"He's carrying bricks on a building." Carl Lenz imitated the gait of one carrying bricks, bent his back and groaned.

"And this is how he collects horse-manure." Adolf Sinsheimer, son of a wealthy button-manufacturer, pretended that he had a broom in his hand; he lied: "I saw Seidel sweeping the road. . . . He was sweeping up fresh horse-manure."

Cautiously, nervously, Jürgen approached the laughing group, joined in their laughter, though he did not know what it was about.

"Does Seidel want a History of the World to go sweeping horse-manure?" All looked expectantly at Jürgen, choking down their laughter.

And Jürgen laughed himself back into his schoolfellows' esteem. "God knows a History of the World's no good if you're going to sweep up horse-manure."

They were satisfied and accepted him. Jürgen went on: "At his house——" He held his nose. "And now this horse-manure into the bargain!" They all held their noses.

The oppression within him suddenly yielded as he realised that he no longer stood alone. And Jürgen made up his mind that henceforth he would always do in every way what the others did. That would make life easy.

Next morning Leo Seidel was back in his seat again, wearing a new suit, and with a sullen face.

Why, oh why did I do what I did? Jürgen's body went home automatically and entered the living-room.

"First you must read the paper to me. Then you can

go to your schoolwork." His aunt continued her embroidery, a canvas table-strip : *If God guides no ill betides*. In the middle of the strip a parrot, not yet completed, was holding the rose-garlanded text in its beak.

The sentence—"A bill to levy a heavy income-tax has again been introduced in the Reichstag"—fell mechanically from Jürgen's lips. I was the only one who stuck to Seidel, he thought ; I spoke about him to Herr Philippi. Now he's been able to come back to school again. I ! I was the cause of that ! Help ! I !

Yes, Jürgen's the best fellow among you, he heard Seidel say. He stuck to me. He's not afraid. He saved me, while you betrayed me. . . .

And I ?—I betrayed him too ! Jürgen looked crazily at his aunt. "How terrible !"

"But so far it's only a bill. Go on reading ! First the death-notices."

"One must be good. . . . Keep on being good until one's incapable of ill."

"You must remember that," said his aunt and drew a green thread through the parrot's eye. "All the death-notices."

"Almighty God has been pleased——" . . . Why didn't Herr Philippi tell me he was going to help Seidel ? Then perhaps I shouldn't have been such a beast. . . . Now nothing's any good !

Jürgen did not notice that his aunt had been called away by the maid-servant.

For a time he suppressed his painful sense of impotence by repeating the words : "Almighty God has been pleased——"; then he looked at the needle, still sticking in the parrot's eye, and at the long green thread hanging down from it ; in imagination he seized a knife in both hands and drove it slowly into his breast.

Uprooted, he floundered through his schoolwork, and had to give up his place in a few weeks to Leo Seidel, who quickly forced his way to the top of the class. Since Seidel worked cautiously and was unassailable, he was feared by the rest of the boys. He never learned who it was that had saved him, not even one day when he sided with the whole class against Jürgen and told them about the History of the World, for which he had searched everywhere in vain.

As Jürgen's loneliness grew more and more oppressive, he fled from it repeatedly to his schoolfellows, and then, in self-disgust at having curried favour with them, back to himself, only to return to them again. At last he attached himself closely to the son of the button-manufacturer, attracted in the first instance by their common hatred of mathematics, and later by a growing admiration for the ease and ability with which, outside the school, Adolf Sinsheimer could deal with every circumstance of life like an adult.

"It's nothing at all just to have a mistress, but if you have a mistress and can talk to her like this: 'I can't come to-night, my dear; sorry, but the club stands first'—then you can call yourself a man, in a manner of speaking. Unfortunately, you can't join the young business-men's club till you've taken the school-leaving certificate. I'll show you the club-house. Of course the servants are in livery, you know."

"But what if one's not going into business?"

"If you're not going into business nowadays you're an ass. . . . Tell me, honest, how often have you been ill?"

"Three times: scarlet-fever, measles, and inflammation of the throat."

"You're a child in arms, in a manner of speaking. The smart men's disease—how often have you had that?"

"I may have had it often, but I don't know what you mean."

By this time they were standing outside the club-house. The strumming of a piano and voices raised in a chorus came down to them from the open, lighted windows. Adolf joined in :

*" There were two lovers, so 'tis said,
Spent all one night together in bed.
I wonder what they did ? "*

Isolated, suppressed laughter swelled suddenly to a roar, as the performer on the platform demonstrated in pantomime what the lovers had done.

" There's nothing to beat happy young folks," said a man with a goatee-beard, whose hat was wreathed in green leaves, to his dusty, perspiring wife. He passed on, pushing the perambulator. It was Sunday evening, and they were returning from a day in the country.

Inside the club-house, the young business-man was singing in a greasy voice. The chorus came down, borne by the strum of the piano :

" I wonder what they did ? "

" Made cold compresses, hey ? For inflammation of the throat ? "

" By night as well as day . . . "

In the midst of a roar of laughter, Jürgen asked hesitatingly : " Do you find all this crushing, too ? I mean not only your own life, but other people's. Life in general, as it is lived to-day ? "

" You can bet they didn't pray."

" Nonsense ! What is there to crush you ? A tight shoe may crush your toes a bit." He put out his foot. " Of course, almost any decent shoe pinches. Looks smart, what ? I'm just going to slip upstairs. You wait here."

Jürgen turned with elephantine slowness and walked away. Presently he came to a crowd of Sunday

excursionists, people of humble station, decked out with twigs of green, shop-girls with their sweethearts, dusty and sweaty, standing in silence under a whistling arc-lamp, allowing the sight of a prostrate man to have its full effect upon them.

There was foam on his lips and his breath came in gasps, as he lay with closed eyes, outstretched in the dust in front of a bank, whose windows announced in embossed gold letters : Capital and Gold Reserve 500 million Marks.

The man with the goatee-beard said loudly : " Epileptic fit ! Pull his thumbs out—that'll bring him round."

The prostrate man threw a lightning glance at the faces bending over him and sat up, supported by five pairs of arms. He let his head sink forward : " It's all the result of poverty. I wanted to take the tram, but hadn't any money. . . . All the result of poverty ! "

Jürgen was seized with disgust. He's only acting, he thought, and forced his way roughly through the circle of spectators.

An experience of his childhood rose before him. Once more a man was lying on the pavement : he was young, with expensive, blood-stained linen, carefully creased check trousers, diamond rings on his fingers, and foam on his lips. His silk waistcoat was torn open, his chest exposed.

But in his case the foam was blood-red. His eyes were open, with a glassy stare. That was genuine and horrible, while this fellow was only acting. . . . But how frightfully he must have suffered before he could lower himself to such a shameless pretence, before he could humiliate himself before all those strangers ! . . . It doesn't matter a scrap whether his fit was genuine or not—or rather the fraud is far more terrible than the reality. What a life he must have led !

Shocked by his own thoughtlessness, he ran back. The

square was empty ; the arc-lamp whistled no longer, but shone calm and white. Jürgen hurried to and fro, searching in vain for the unfortunate man. Presently he found himself in front of the bank again, looked up at the embossed gold letters, and clearly saw the beggar lying in front of him.

*" The nightingales sang on the trees,
The evening that Urselchen fell.
Did she trip on the stones in the dell ? "*

—the song came down clearly from the club-room :

" No, over, then under, Carlchen's knees ! "

And they just go past, up into their club, and sing such songs as that ! How terrible ! . . . And what now ? he asked himself, as he walked on. Is this just one thing more, added to all the rest ? . . . A man must keep constant watch till he is incapable of evil. That was a vow . . .

Then an idea occurred to him, bringing with it such relief that though it was Sunday and ten o'clock at night, he went to a sign-writer's and pulled the bell.

" . . . Of course, you're quite right. I know it could have waited till the morning, but I happened to be just passing."

" Well, what kind of a sign-board do you want ? "

Begging Permitted—that won't do, thought Jürgen. Nor *Begging Invited*. " I want a nice board with *Alms Given Here*."

" Do you actually intend to put it up ? You'll have the surprise of your life, my lad."

" No, it's the others who'll have a surprise."

" That's true, too ! Well, how would you like it ? White letters on black ? Or black on white ? Or something coloured ? Or gilt ?

"What do you think of gold letters on black?"

"Good. It'll look very well. . . . *Alms Given Here*, isn't it? My God, I've never written such stuff in all my life!"

With the maid-servant's help Jürgen nailed the sign-board firmly to the garden-fence at the back of the house, where his aunt seldom came. He gave the maid-servant money. "Will that be enough for a month?"

The gold letters, *Alms given here*, shone brightly. Underneath, Jürgen had affixed a notice on which was written: *From 9 to 11 a.m.* During these hours his aunt was always at church.

Loose-limbed and loose-jointed as a young animal, lanky and always in such violent haste that his slouching, stooping figure formed an acute angle with the ground, Jürgen stumbled into youth, into the seventeenth spring of his life, his inquiring eyes seeking vainly and constantly in himself and in his environment for a saving answer to his questions.

Smartly dressed, long-legged little girls were racing after their hoops in the public gardens, their skirts blown chin-high by the May wind and the joy of their play. The spring sky extended, silken blue, above the beds of tulips and hyacinths, the lawns, smooth as billiard-tables, and the budding crowns of the trees. Even elderly governesses looked rosy.

Uncertain whether to stay or to hurry aimlessly on as before, Jürgen looked round him, breathing the scent of the flowers. The wind shook his long, stubborn tangles of hair. Several times he had to brush them from his forehead before he could clearly see Katharina, the fifteen-year-old daughter of Professor Lenz. Her shoulders were still angular, but already life had visibly set its mark upon her, as, with an air of estrangement, she watched the high-spirited play of the children. Becoming conscious

of Jürgen's intent stare, she looked first into the pond, where old carp, and goldfish as long as a man's arm, glided slowly to the surface out of the tangle of water-plants and sank slowly into the depths again; then she went on reading her book.

The thick column of water from the fountain overtook itself unceasingly. The blue sky overhead seemed to share its motion.

With feigned interest, Jürgen examined the trees, the pond, the fountain, and, as he did so, revolved in ever-narrowing circles round the reading girl, whose whole body, though she made no movement, grew visibly more constrained and unapproachable the nearer he came.

Suddenly, from five paces away: "Those are carp—and real ones. You can eat them." How stupid of me to say that! he thought, and sat down.

She went on reading, her face, with an air of interest, held at an angle to the page.

Then his helpless, suppliant eyes met her glance, where an early awareness of life had still to struggle with the shyness of a girl.

It was as though that dark burden of consciousness that lay in her eyes like her future self, quite detached from the charming childishness with which she twitched her frock over her knee, had awakened in Jürgen a sense that their fates were bound together. Suddenly, for the first time in his life, he experienced unreserved trust in another person. It appeared more in his look and the tone of his voice than in the words he used.

The busy world was around them. Speech and answer took place in its innermost centre. Question and response. To a question of Katharina's he was able to answer: "Perhaps we carry within us all we have experienced. It drags us first one way then another. And every day, every

hour, something is added to it, and everything is terrible. Everything ! The whole of life as it is now."

As though this had brought him relief, he asked if she would go for a walk with him. Katharina got up at once. He was a full head taller than she. They disappeared down a path between close-clipped hedges of Cornelian cherry.

He glanced at the wilful curve of her sunburned neck and, as she looked up, at her small firm mouth. They stopped, both trembling, and turned trembling away.

"I know all I need to know about you. My brother has told me a lot, including that about the History of the World. He's stupid. He understands nothing."

His sense of trust led him to tell her of the sign-board, *Alms given here*, he had nailed to the garden-fence. "But it was so much talked about that, one morning before the end of the first week, over three hundred beggars turned up. Of course, I know now that all that is no good at all. And if my aunt hadn't taken down the sign, I should have done it myself. . . . But what is one to do ?"

Two long minutes later, as though she had read the answer from the tips of her shoes : "There's only one thing : we must sacrifice ourselves — sacrifice ourselves completely."

"That's—that's wonderful, quite wonderful, what you've just said. . . . But how ? How are we to sacrifice ourselves ?"

Every day for weeks his aunt had taken a walk by doctor's orders in the public gardens. For some time she had sat there, unable to breathe. At last she came to herself with a start, recoiled against the back of the bench, hurriedly gathered up her bag of crochet-work, shot down the path after her nephew, seized him by the hand—in defiance of his superior height—and led him silently and resolutely away from Katharina.

In the despairing, sleepless nights that followed Jürgen

decided that he could never face Katharina again until he had left his father's house for ever.

When the nervous fever that seized him began to threaten his life, the family doctor was forced to hand over the treatment to a specialist. Weeks passed before the patient's mind and emotions were so nearly restored to health that one morning, on waking, he was able to surrender himself weakly to the impressions that reached him.

His aunt pushed aside the medicine bottles on the bedside-table, opened her housekeeping book, where she had written down his dead father's "Final Dispositions concerning Jürgen," and began to read aloud the many pages devoted to an educational programme.

The words dropped scorchingly into his defenceless mind.

" . . . and therefore I solemnly vow to train the last member of the ancient and noble family of Kolbenreiherr, whose history goes back to the beginning of the fifteenth century, in accordance with the wishes of his unforgettable father, and to make him a civil servant, since, in the opinion of my deceased brother, he has not the ability for anything better. . . . So that's the situation, Jürgen. Do you understand? Now you must get better as soon as possible. . . . I'm fond of you, you know, even if you aren't all that you might be." She looked at him kindly, stroked his damp hair and cried in dismay: "You're feverish again!"

His cheeks and eyes were burning. The right side of his face seemed to laugh.

They fetched the doctors; Jürgen was packed in ice. The relapse was short and violent.

When Jürgen left his bed, he was impenetrably reserved; his former resolve to fight his way through the complexities of adolescence had been sapped away. His aunt frequently expressed her satisfaction. He never spoke unless she

spoke to him first, and then it was always the answer she wanted. He never said "No" when "Yes" was expected of him.

His infinite submissiveness put him at the mercy of everyone, even of schoolboys much smaller than himself. At the same time he grew physically out of all recognition. He grew tall and very strong. He postponed his work for the approaching examination from day to day, and went skating for hours up the river.

The fishermen breaking the ice cursed him angrily, for about here it was extremely dangerous to skate on account of the many great square holes cut in the ice.

Feeling that his mind might be freed from its constraints by some physical feat, by moving at great speed, Jürger went racing on past the greenish holes that yawned unexpectedly at his feet, till the coming of night surprised him.

The high road led straight back to the town, while the river described a wide curve, so that Jürger would have reached home more quickly on foot than on the ice.

The secret wish for death that had once placed an imaginary knife in his hand, and had driven him to the mouth of a tunnel, now compelled him to run blindly into fresh danger.

The fishermen had long since gone home. Jürger stood, a dark figure, in the unreal light that radiated from the ice. Ten steps in front of him was pitch-black night. The ice cracked softly. Jürger uttered animal cries as he hurtled back, a black right-angle, towards the town.

When he glided round the edge of a water-hole his wild cry of exaltation rang through the solitude.

Nearer the town the holes lay thicker together; they lay to right and left of him, and sometimes gaped unexpectedly at his feet.

Tense and silent now, he drew circles round death.

CHAPTER II

THE boys who had passed the school-leaving examination were listening impatiently to the long speech with which the headmaster took final leave of them. At last he threw out his chest and pointed with his forefinger towards the window. They all felt immediately that this was the beginning of the peroration.

They were to undertake the responsibilities of life as fine, efficient men. He was still pointing out through the window. There was dead silence. "Highly respected men." His chest and his forefinger sank simultaneously and the boys streamed out from among the benches.

The waves of noise rolled away, became fainter, swelled up again, as it came in through the window from the street, came in with the sunshine to the empty benches. And died rapidly away.

A voice resounded through the silence of the empty hall. "I want to thank you gentlemen for all your kindness to me while I've been at school." You dirty swine! added Leo Seidel to himself. He came forward and inserted his shoulder under the outstretched hand of the headmaster: "If only you would be so very kind, sir, as to give me a little help with regard to my future——"

"Not every boy can expect to go to the university; that's obvious."

Else where would the postmen and servants come from?

"But you shall have that clerkship in the municipal offices. I've already spoken about it. . . . See that you

do me credit. You must become a highly respected man like the rest."

The assistant masters gave precedence to the head, bowed themselves, polite but excited, farther and farther away from the open door.

Adolf Sinsheimer's face, that stood out as a pure oval from its frame—for years he had worn a black silk band stretched over his projecting ears, hoping that in time they would lie flat against his head—had grown so puffy during the examination that he had to take off the band. His two ears came to life immediately and shot forward again. "Now we shall begin to live, old man. D'you know what that means? Live! I'm not half looking forward to it! I'm going to buy a bowler hat to-morrow and join the young business-men's club. We're quite undisturbed at the club. No women!"

After an obstinate fight with his aunt, Jürgen carried his point and, instead of becoming a civil servant, was allowed to study philosophy; he wrote a treatise that aroused widespread attention, and on the strength of it was elected mayor of his native town. . . . "That's the way to live happily!"

"Rather! You can take my word for it!" While Adolf Sinsheimer was telling him of the suits he was going to have made, Jürgen became the proprietor of a factory which employed twenty thousand hands; with a stroke of the pen he provided that henceforth the clerical staff, himself, and all the twenty thousand hands should participate equally in the profits.

The old book-keeper cried in dismay: But, Herr Kolbenreih—!

Enough! That is my wish. It is only fair and just. And Jürgen sent the old book-keeper kindly but firmly from the room.

“ At home I shall just tell my guv’nor that he won’t get me to the breaking-up dance without an evening suit and patent-leather shoes. . . . Listen, Jürgen, I tell you—in strict confidence—I’m not going to waste my time at the dance with those little flappers from the dancing-class. Not I ! ”

And if anything happens to one of you in my factory—that is, in our factory—he shall have a pension for life.

“ I’m going to stick to the real beauties that can dance perfectly. Have you any objection to a pair of breasts ? I haven’t.”

When Adolf had taken leave of him—“ I shall take the opportunity of calling on you this afternoon ”—Jürgen wondered why he had never in all his life, until the last few days, thought seriously of the problems of existence and of the misery of other people. Why not years ago ? Why should these ideas have come to me that evening, as I was standing in the garden after supper, and heard the voices of men talking angrily in the garden next door, and, farther off, the disjointed notes of a concertina ?

Hitherto he had thought only of himself and his own troubles, and even that only when some unpleasant personal experience compelled him to do so ; but that evening in the garden he had asked himself, with unaccountable suddenness and for no apparent reason, why Phinchen, their good-natured and quite intelligent housemaid, had to stand in the kitchen all her life, to clean the stairs, the windows, the shoes ; to do up the bedrooms, wear unsightly clothes, go untaught. For instance, Phinchen never read good books and could not understand them, but his aunt and himself ate the food she had carefully prepared, wore the linen she had carefully ironed, and could read Shakespeare and Goethe whenever they pleased. He asked himself why seventeen hundred workmen were forced to

slave every day, early and late, from the age of fourteen till death carried them off, in the paper-factory of Herr Hommes, while unnumbered thousands of young men and women, who did little or nothing, were able to go out walking every day, smartly dressed and well cared for; why the workers had such hard labour to perform, daily and hourly, and the wealthy only pleasant tasks or none at all; why, in fact, there were rich and poor; why one man was poor and another rich; why the poor had to do whatever the rich demanded, and whether all this was a natural law or merely human choice.

Since that mysterious moment he had been hanging, as it were, in a net of thought, seeking vainly for the centre, whence he could understand the fundamental cause of the baseness of life that oppressed him.

His aunt welcomed him gladly. "Your future is quite clear and in order," she said. "You will become a state official. A stipendiary magistrate in some nice little town. That will be your career. I'm so happy!"

Jürgen's head nodded. You're not fit for anything better. His anger was on the point of bursting out, but it changed to a crooked, dangerous smile, as his aunt solemnly rose to say grace.

"I won't become a magistrate. I won't pass sentence on other people."

The maid stopped half-way from the door, with hands folded. "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. . . . Bring a bottle of wine too, Phinchen."

The unusual fineness of the damask cloth, the heavy family plate making one of its rare appearances, his aunt's air of solemnity and Jürgen's remark, caused the meal to pass in silence and constraint.

"And when finally you become a magistrate," began his aunt, in a kindly tone, over the sweets, as though she had

not heard his refusal, "you will realise at last that you can only win the respect of your fellow-men by a strict adherence to duty. You will be a highly respected man. And, still more important, a man with a steady income. Even when I'm no longer here. Duty before all things!"

Phinchen managed to say: "You'll live for a long time yet, ma'am." Jürgen's aunt pointed to her brooch: "My chest's not very strong." And Jürgen asked: "But what is duty?"

"Everyone knows what duty is. Everyone must do his duty. . . . Bring a little more fruit-salad. . . . You don't wish to be a magistrate? I say: You must be a magistrate. You don't wish to pass sentence on other people? You must! For your father decided all that. I repeat: Duty before all things!"

"Does Hommes, the owner of the paper-mills, do his duty when he rides out every day on horseback beside his wife's carriage? Who says it is the duty of those seventeen hundred workmen to go to Hommes' factory every morning? And who can say whether it is my duty to become a magistrate and pass sentence on other people——"

"Your dead father and I."

"—or to work in a factory, or to go out riding every day, while other people work for me?"

"That's all nonsense." His aunt folded her napkin precisely. "You may clear." And led the way upstairs to Jürgen's room.

He had to sit on the sofa, above which the faded portraits of the Kolbenreier family, each in an oval frame, were hanging symmetrically in a larger oval. In the middle was a photograph of his father as a young man. His aunt moved a bunch of mignonette which stood exactly in the middle of the table—she had picked it herself in the garden in honour of the day's event—into the middle of the table,

and straightened a parrot-embroidered towel-cover, her present to Jürgen. "You'll join one of the best students' corps. You'll wear a nice green cap or a blue one, and learn to shoot and fence—not too much, of course, but enough to give you courage, because that's the sort of thing that's done. . . . Now, here's a candlestick! Some day when I'm under the ground you'll have the other. That won't be very long—and then you'll have everything."

She went on to describe fluently, as though she were again reading from her housekeeping-book, the whole course of Jürgen's life: in so and so many years he would reach this grade of the service or that, later he would rise still higher, and finally attain the rank of stipendiary magistrate, with a salary of so and so much; he would reach the age when one was awarded a decoration and then be pensioned off. "That was your father's wish. If you do your duty, your colleagues will say, when you come to be buried: 'We can take him as a fine example to all of us.' . . . You can't ask more of life than that, Jürgen. My grandfather once said to me: 'You can measure the respect in which a man was held during his life by the length of his funeral procession.'"

Jürgen's mind shot far ahead, beyond the rank of a retired and pensioned stipendiary magistrate; he rose in a few seconds to be a world-famous leader of science; he was given a breastful of the highest decorations—to which he did not pay the slightest attention—became incidentally mayor of the town, was elected to the Reichstag, and accepted the premiership. All his fellow-citizens bowed to him respectfully. Full of satisfaction, he watched his own colossal funeral procession.

"Yes, Jürgen; that's the thing: do your duty and earn the respect of your fellow-men . . ."

Suddenly as a clock stops ticking, Jürgen's enthusiasm

died away. The magnificent edifice of his future collapsed noiselessly.

"Duty is what you give to life ; respect is what you get from it. . . . But in any case you still have our garden and me," said his aunt, and went out. Adolf Sinsheimer had come in.

He lolled back in the big old arm-chair like an English lord in his club. "I've had a straight talk with my guv'nor. We've agreed on my future career."

The fact that the very people I most distrust, because they've treated me the worst, all want me to become a highly respected man, is in itself a warning against becoming one. Perhaps a man is utterly lost once he becomes respected. "What's it to be ?"

"Industry, old man, industry ! Only the tremendous growth of our industry has secured for Germany her present position in the world. . . . My father is of the same opinion. We'll go for a walk presently, and I'll show you the business I'm going to join. . . . By the way, do you smoke ? See this case ?—I bought it to-day. You don't smoke ? Well, that's the limit ! . . . Come in !" cried Adolf in a strident voice.

Phinchen stopped with a smile of embarrassment in the doorway. The coffee-pot was steaming. Adolf sighed and threw one leg over the other. "Come in, come in. . . . You don't mean to say you drink this women's stuff ?"

"She's in love. You can take my word for it," he said, when Phinchen had gone. And on the stairs he added : "A girl that's always laughing is in love. . . . Our manager is of the same opinion." They walked together down the street.

"Who's she in love with then ?" Jürgen looked straight in front of him.

"With us, of course. With a man, as you might say." He unbuckled his ear-band. "I've had enough of this thing!" And threw it down on the pavement. His ears promptly recovered. "It's devilish easy to make an impression on a young thing like that," he went on, fingering his pink silk tie. Jürgen put up his hand to *his* tie, which was no broader than his finger, of the sort worn by schoolboys.

"Well, there it is." Adolf pointed across the square to a huge building at the corner.

"Buttons." The word appeared in letters over a yard high above each of the four rows of windows. It could be seen from a great distance. On the signboard was painted: *Simon Eberlein, Europe's Largest Button Exporter. Buttons of all Varieties.*

"This is where I'm going to learn the business. Well, what d'you think of it? . . . Stop, just look at it from this point! A tremendous turnover, believe me! They do business all over the world! . . . America! Come along!"

He took Jürgen's arm and led him across the square to the electric lift which ran up the outside of the building. Adolf read aloud: "*Three tons and attendant.* Just imagine it! That lift can carry three tons of buttons. . . . Just imagine it!"

"That's an awful weight," said Jürgen dreamily.

"Colossal!" He led him cautiously to the ground-floor windows, the lower halves of which were protected with thin iron bars, painted a grass-green colour.

In the offices, all uniformly equipped, young clerks were at work. Seven rows of tables traversed the workroom, and at these, deft, girlish hands were carding buttons by piecework. All the walls were covered with cards of sample buttons. A sliding door in the further wall was

wide open. Beyond was an exactly similar room, and through this Jürgen and Adolf could see into a third work-room where the people, diminished in perspective, were moving about like insects.

A side-door opened and a clerk dashed into the nearest room; he sped through it like lightning and was gone again. At the gate of the yard a warehouseman was standing, a bunch of dispatch-notes in his hand, monotonously calling out letters and numbers. Another man repeated them in a sing-song voice, and the carters wheeled the corresponding cases of buttons to the drays that were standing in readiness.

"Let's risk it," said Jürgen, "and go into the café. I've got some money."

"I say, if you haven't I can help you out. Don't hesitate to call on me. Is this enough?"

"But I have some."

Adolf's forehead wrinkled in a frown. "Oh, come now! Among friends! I'm pretty flush to-day."

Jürgen opened his purse. "Here, look for yourself. I've got enough."

"Jürgen, this is an absolute insult. Take this money. . . . Otherwise I can't possibly go on associating with you." Adolf's hands and shoulders gave emphasis to his words: "Remember, we're not schoolboys any more, as you might say." He opened the door. "After you!"

At one table, wreathed in clouds of cigar-smoke, were the skat-players, all with bald heads; a party of nine over-dressed, parrot-like women with coloured bonnets were drinking coffee, separated by a screen from the silent readers of newspapers. The head-waiter did his work with zealous attention; sometimes he stood motionless on his raised observation-post beside the bar, the whole place under his alert eye. There was a table free by a

window that looked out towards the premises of the button-exporter.

The under-waiter was standing motionless in exactly the same posture as his superior, his legs neatly crossed ; at a wink from the head-waiter he glided zealously and attentively round the tables to the two friends. It was only ten days since he had first become a waiter.

"What can I get for you, gentlemen?" Receiving no reply, he reeled off: "Beer, wine, coffee, tea, chocolate. . . . Ices, punch, mulled wine, lemonade." He looked down respectfully at the drops of sweat that came out on the foreheads of the two friends, and, his sense of superiority increasing with their growing helplessness, repeated his sing-song poem.

Adolf ordered two glasses of mulled wine and two glasses of grenadine cordial. He said, when the under-waiter had hurried back to the bar: "I've ordered two mulled wines and two grenadines. I hope you don't mind!"

On his way to the table the under-waiter swung the tray gently upwards, as though it were floating on a wave, let it swim down and land with a crash on the marble top of the table, without spilling a single drop.

"The grenadine tastes like the covers of the Old Testament history books—you know, when you lick them," said Jürgen, pulling a face.

Not till the two friends, sitting in a bath of hot sunshine, had burnt their tongues with the steaming wine and lighted their cigarillos, did Adolf regain his self-control ; he leaned back and looked across at the button warehouse. "Just now you were able to see the ground-floor rooms. The same thing is going on on all the other three floors. And there are vast stocks of buttons in the attics and the cellar. . . . Just think of it: the whole of that huge building crammed full of buttons. Of every variety, mark you!"

The hot sunshine, combined with the cigarillos and the mulled wine, had made Jürgen feel sick: the stocks of buttons became alive, were transformed into a great sea of black beetles, that crawled over the walls and over each other. In the misty distance he could still hear Adolf's enthusiastic voice:

"Every variety, absolutely every variety of button! I'm going to start a button-collection. It'll be the biggest in the world. Complete! Just think, what other collector will have the same opportunities as I? . . . My future colleagues over there, who would, in a manner of speaking, be in the same position, have probably never even thought of collecting buttons."

The head-waiter floated through the café a good eighteen inches above the floor. Jürgen did not dare, for Adolf's sake, to throw away the cigarillo. The stump in one corner of his mouth and his face bathed in cold sweat, he looked over at his friend with a strained effort at smiling ease.

Adolf was busy outlining a scheme of his father's, who was a large manufacturer of buttons, and wished, so soon as Adolf had properly learnt his competitor's business methods, to add to his factory an export business of his own. "There you have my career. My path goes upwards straight as an arrow. . . . In a logical progression, as you might say. . . . Industry and commerce, old man! Everything else is romanticism."

They looked out of the window. The horses in front of the button-warehouse bent to their collars; the towering loads of clean packing-cases, full of buttons, rolled away towards the neighbouring goods station.

The dray-loads of buttons, the whole café, the skat-players, the brass candelabra, the benches with their velvet upholstery, circled round Jürgen like a switchback.

He wanted to mention casually that in a few years' time he would probably be elected mayor, and said with a desperate effort to appear indifferent: "Perhaps it wouldn't be a bad idea to go out into the nice fresh air for a bit."

Outside the café, Jürgen saw a well-dressed woman go up to a cripple, who had lost his right arm and left leg. The cripple's wife instantly put away the note and met her husband's furious glance with a look steeled by misery. The cries of the wretched baby on her arm interrupted the mute conflict between them. The family moved on, drab, slow, enraged.

When the open tramcar had traversed the crowded streets, had left behind it the last of the houses and the huge gasometer, and was racing unimpeded through rolling pasture-land towards the terminus, Jürgen's cheeks regained their colour in the cool rush of air.

An old gentleman, grey and stiff, as though he were made of pieces of grey papier-maché glued together, swayed stiffly to and fro.

"Even when there's plenty of room, old people never ride with their faces towards their destination. . . . Young people always do!"

"That's just clever nonsense." Adolf was leaning back negligently, one leg thrown over the other.

"Old people don't want to see anything new. They always look backward into the past."

"Absolute bosh! Just clever nonsense!"

"Young people want to see where they're going."

Suddenly the rows of trees in the avenue stopped flying backward past the windows. The tram halted, with a grinding of brakes, at the terminus. Silence, through which came the twittering of a bird.

The driver was left behind alone, and sat down in a

ditch by the roadside. The tramcar stood alien and unrelated in the landscape. The day had been long and hot. •

Jürgen, quickly in harmony with Nature, wanted to walk home through the wood, while Adolf, who had been placed too abruptly among the green trees, cast unwilling glances at a ploughed field and proposed riding back in the tram.

The sun was already sinking and the windows of the town cast back its fires. The country was spread out far in front of them, gently undulating. The distant woods seemed no taller than a man's hand. The rising note of a whistle from the paper factory swept the workmen out through its gates. Already a green star had appeared in the sky. Pairs of lovers went past with linked arms, walking into the summer night.

“They must be pretty deeply in love with each other. Of course, you don't notice it.” Adolf sat down with his back towards the front of the car. “You sit like this !” he demanded. Jürgen reminded himself that it was against his will that he was riding back at all. “I'm going to sit like this.”

“Clever nonsense ! You can't deny it.”

“I do deny it. I do deny it.” . . . He was still repeating the words to himself as he entered the kitchen and looked at the moist, plump shoulders of Phinchen, who was standing at the ironing-board, red-faced, in a petticoat and chemise.

His head remained clear ; but a hitherto unknown feeling attacked his legs. Phinchen was too agitated to cover her exposed and heaving breast.

Then the house door slammed. Jürgen staggered out of the kitchen.

“Henceforth you must always be properly dressed.

The young master is no longer a child." Jürgen's aunt demonstrated the proprieties with the aid of her brooch. "Your shoulders and all this here must be properly covered up. You are too plump to go about in a petticoat. It's not seemly." She explained that the petticoat might come undone, and then the young master would see her in nothing but her chemise.

Jürgen's aunt took a fresh candle from the kitchen cupboard, made a cut all round it with a knife—an inch and a quarter below the wick—and went upstairs to Jürgen's little room.

Without speaking, she placed the candle in the silver candlestick and lighted it. Then she pointed to the mark she had made. "You must stop reading when it's burnt down to there. . . . Your habit of reading in bed and, for that matter, all your ideals—I mean, what you call ideals—must be brought within proper bounds."

Jürgen watched the little flame grow stronger, rise up straight, and begin to flicker again, as his aunt went on speaking. "To-morrow I shall let you have only one inch for your reading. The day after still less. And gradually you will reach the point of not reading in bed at all, d'you see? . . . Your mother liked to read in bed, too, but your father broke her off it. If you can't be strict with yourself, then someone else must be strict with you. . . . Your mother let you do what you liked. She spoilt you. A mother ought never to do that."

"You can't possibly know; you've never been a mother." With astonishment he saw her whole face, even her forehead, flush darkly. Her mouth hung open. In a state of unaccountable agitation she left the room.

Jürgen took a photograph of his mother from the wall; for a long time he contemplated her frightened, girlish eyes, the pain round her mouth that defeated her attempt

to smile. He propped the photograph against the candlestick.

In his bookcase there were only travel books and stories of adventure in bright, pictorial bindings. He took the *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* and climbed into bed. In company with the adventurous hero, he floated on a raft through a gap riven in the rocks, found himself suddenly in a cave, and, borne on foaming masses of water, hurtled almost vertically down into the earth. Nocturnal silence settled over the house.

Pitch blackness surrounded Jürgen and his raft, as it shot with terrific speed on a torrent that plunged and roared with ever-increasing fury down into the depths. For twelve long days he was in constant and terrible danger of being dashed to pieces.

Suddenly his frantic speed began to diminish: he floated out from a cleft in the rock and, with unexpected ease, was borne into a marvellous, silent sea in the centre of the earth. On its shores were half-human creatures with the heads of cows.

Despite the fact that there was no sky, a strange, greenish brightness lay over the valley and the quiet woods.

With great caution the adventurer explored the valley for dangerous savages, made some exceptionally important discoveries, and finally fell to considering how he could get his raft back up that sheer, hurtling wall of water and so return from the centre of the earth back to its surface.

Hot with excitement, Jürgen looked up reflectively, and noted with a shock that more than half the candle had quietly burnt away.

As Jürgen lay dreaming that he was catching winged jewels as big as parrots, and fighting desperately with cow-headed human beings, which suddenly changed into highly respected men, Adolf put on his kid gloves, went to the

young business-men's club, and was there introduced by a solemnly correct chairman to the other new members, who were his former schoolfellows. •

A few weeks later a history of philosophy, containing a number of notes on slips of paper, was lying on Jürgen's bedside-table.

The boys who had left school together had now separated into two groups, and henceforth they came no more in contact with each other. The one section was studying at the university ; their interests were different from those of the sons of business-men, who had entered their fathers' businesses.

Leo Seidel was working at the municipal offices, in the department where the addresses of the town's inhabitants were kept for reference. Its dingy windows looked out on the north side of a court into which the sun never penetrated.

From month to month the dissatisfaction of his colleagues had grown greater and greater. Every morning, when they reached the office, they found Leo Seidel sitting at his desk, already well forward with his day's copying.

None was more resentful than Herr Hohmeier. He was a very slow worker, but in accordance with his years of service he was the next member of the staff due for promotion. He had lived for months in constant dread lest Seidel, who was not only very industrious and painfully conscientious, but also very quick, should be given the letter M, which, on account of the numerous Müllers and Maiers, would have signified advancement outside the recognised order, and the passing-over of Herr Hohmeier.

Seidel was still in charge of the unimportant letter Y, and was therefore never disturbed in his copying. With his youngest colleague, who had been engaged at the same time as himself, he occupied a desk for two, above which was a single gas-jet.

Herr Neubert and Herr Hohmeier each had a desk to himself, and each desk had a gas-jet of its own. Above Herr Ank's desk, in accordance with his higher rank, was a double gas-bracket with two jets under green shades. The head of the department had, in addition to this, a revolving chair with an official leather cushion. Moreover, his blotter was considerably wider than the rest.

Seidel's intention was to burst through this firmly knit scheme of things and overstep the lower grades. He wanted to be spared the gradual advance towards the wider blotter.

His colleagues had not failed to notice the fact.

The day on which the catastrophe occurred began with Herr Hohmeier making preparations to blow his nose. He moved to one side his sheets of foolscap and his narrow blotter, and carefully spread out his handkerchief on the top of the desk.

Meanwhile, outside the sliding window, a juggler was waiting, standing first on one foot, then on the other, restless as a man compelled to master a bodily need because the appropriate place is occupied; he watched Herr Hohmeier weigh down his handkerchief with a large key and then with the blotter. When finally he was able to ask for his friend's address, he learned that the police themselves had for some time been inquiring for the same man, a painter named Ferdinand Wiederschein.

"We've managed to find out that for weeks this painter has been sleeping every night in a different bed. When morning comes he takes his bag with him, and in the evening looks out for a fresh place to spend the night. . . . He never even comes to us to register."

The caretaker emptied the coal-hod into the old iron stove, on which Eve, now red-hot, was offering a red-hot apple to Adam. The artiste's laughter shook the room.

"There's nothing to laugh at. It's a serious matter. If everybody acted like that, this office would be in complete disorder." Herr Hohmeier went on gfumbling to himself, as he prepared to drape the handkerchief over his outspread fingers, like a conjurer making ready to do a trick.

During the quarter of an hour devoted to a mid-morning snack, a large number of people had gathered in the dark waiting-room. The clerks went on calmly eating, undisturbed by life, which could approach no nearer than the sliding window.

The more impatient coughed, scuffled their feet, and finally rapped on the shutter. The waiting-room was packed with people.

When the clock chimed a quarter to eleven, Herr Hohmeier pushed back the shutter and found that several inquirers had gone away again. The nine still waiting there all required information about persons whose names began with the letters C to G, letters of which Herr Hohmeier himself had charge.

He asked amicably who had been there first. At this a quarrel arose. Quite a number of people had been there first. A black-faced coalman pushed the rest to one side and demanded the address of a family who had left without paying their coal-bill.

While Herr Hohmeier fingered the pigeon-holes in a vain search for the necessary documents, the quarrel in the outer room broke out afresh. At last the anger of the whole crowd was turned on Herr Hohmeier.

Seidel began again to ponder the question of whether in the whole wide world there was another young man cut off from distinction and advancement by the petty and damnable fact that scarcely anyone's name began with the letter Y.

Herr Hohmeier returned once more to the coalman and asked him whether he had written down the name correctly. The crowd swore and pushed their slips of paper through the window.

"Herr Hohmeier, allow me to help." Seidel collected the slips of paper.

"No, I can't allow it, Herr Seidel; I tell you I can't allow it. . . . These are all my letters."

A babel of cries from those waiting outside. The head of the department, brought by the noise from the little room where he was eating his lunch, ruled that for this once the two young gentlemen might be allowed to help. "Quite as an exception!" Herr Hohmeier turned pale and maintained a baleful silence, while the work was quickly and smoothly completed.

Herr Hohmeier could not get on with his work. He was blinded by a terrific internal excitement. An idea that was constantly present in his mind, namely, that on the day he was promoted, he would buy himself a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, and on the day of his next promotion become at least engaged to the girl who had grown old at his side—this idea forced itself obstinately into the forefront of his mind. Over and over again, he saw himself in his gold-rimmed spectacles standing before the altar. More than an hour had passed before he could find the words that had to be said, once and for all, to Seidel.

"That regrettable incident that occurred just now urgently demands an explanation. For my part, I must tell you that in this office it is no good pushing oneself forward. I could express myself in stronger terms——"

"I must ask you not to disturb me when I'm at work."

"—for if all the staff do their work conscientiously—and there's not the slightest reason to doubt it—so that no one

is dismissed, you, Herr Seidel, will sit at my desk in eight years' time, and at Herr Ank's desk in twelve years. . . . Meanwhile, I shall have sat at Herr Ank's desk, Herr Ank at the head clerk's desk, and the head clerk, in accordance with his years of service, will pass on to a higher position in another office. . . . In this building there are many offices to pass through before we are pensioned. There can be no question of breaking through the established order. That is what I wanted to say to you." With trembling lips he went back to his desk.

At the beginning of this circumstantial explanation, Leo Seidel had said to himself that there was evidently no scope for ability in municipal offices, so that rapid promotion was practically impossible. That same evening he wrote with extreme neatness a letter of resignation.

Carl Lenz, now a member of one of the students' corps, drew one foot scraping backward along the ground as he bowed with jerky severity to his former schoolfellow, Jürgen. A tobacco-pipe more than a yard long was held against his shoulder, as an officer holds a sword. He inquired of Jürgen to which corps he belonged.

"I'm studying philosophy, as you know. I've been at the university for a year now," said Jürgen proudly. "I don't belong to any corps. . . . I wanted to pay my respects to Professor Lenz."

Carl Lenz, his body still inclined stiffly forward, jerked his head outwards, and a rasping sound escaped from his open lips: "Don't belong to a corps? . . . Kindly remember that my father was raised a week ago to the rank of Privy Councillor." He wheeled round to the left, turned his back on his visitor, and puffed at his pipe as he stared through the window.

For Jürgen the real world sank out of existence, putting

an end to all natural thought and feeling. After a moment's pause he said : " I congratulate you."

Carl Lenz responded by blowing out a white cloud of smoke, that rolled slowly up the window-pane. He made no movement. And suddenly Jürgen was seated among a brilliant assembly of students ; he, too, was wearing a green cap, pushed rakishly to the back of his head, and a coloured band across his chest. They were drinking his health. He was respected, honoured, looked up to as a leader. Carl Lenz came up and stared challengingly at him. At first Jürgen stared back, then sprang to his feet. Silence. All sprang to their feet. Cards were exchanged. Jürgen bore himself with exemplary courage during the duel. Phinchen was deathly pale with admiration. And his aunt asked him to tell her how it all happened.

Well, he stared at me. You know the sort of man I am, auntie ; there was nothing for it under the circumstances but to challenge him. I spent the whole night in revelry with my friends, as though nothing unusual had happened. Then the whole crowd of us drove off to the wood. They waited at the inn for me, and I went out to fight him as cool and fresh as though I'd just stepped out of a bath.

Good heavens, Jürgen, but weren't you afraid ?

Afraid ? My dear aunt ! . . . He had the choice of position and stood in the shadow of a tree, while I had the sun in my eyes. . . . Well, we'd hardly crossed swords before—I, of course, pinked him.

Yes, and what then ?

Lord, an honourable reconciliation. When once blood has flowed, you know—— But what a reception I got when I reached the inn ! However, enough of that. Let's forget it.

Carl Lenz, still standing motionless, with feet apart, by

the window, was wreathed in blue smoke. From the next room came the clinking of glasses. Suddenly he wheeled round and glared into his visitor's face.

This time Jürgen followed his example and clapped his heels together. They clenched hands tightly and shook. Both bodies jerked stiffly towards each other several times; then the zig-zag line formed by the two upper arms and fore arms was ceremonially arrested with the joined hands at the height of their foreheads.

And as Jürgen bowed his way backwards to the sofa, Carl Lenz bowed himself to the door, and so into the adjacent room, where three glasses of beer stood waiting for him on the table.

Carl Lenz had carried with him into his room the artificial expression he had worn during the leave-taking. Now it fell from his face, and a look of dull and savage concentration took its place. With a glass of beer in one hand and his watch in the other, he stood waiting for the second hand to reach the figure one. As it drew nearer, his mouth opened wide. Suddenly his eyes grew fixed and watery, as the beer poured into his stomach. "*Bierjunge!*" And the empty glass crashed down on the table.

At the word *Bierjunge* a portion of the beer spurted out in a wide arc from his mouth, while his eyes stared down at the second hand of his watch. A plaintive look came into his face. He had taken more than a second too long.

"I swallowed again. I can't get out of swallowing. That's the whole trouble." He went resolutely on with his training. The second hand reached the figure one. Gaping mouth. Empty glass. A terrible groan: "*Bierjunge!*"

Jürgen, sitting on the sofa in the next room, started nervously forward again and listened attentively. A few seconds later the hand of Privy Councillor Lenz was laid

on Jürgen's shoulder. "Well, my friend, which corps have you joined?"

"*Bierjunge!*"

"Ah, my boy's practising. It's good to be young." Privy Councillor Lenz was fond of Moselle wine.

What will happen, thought Jürgen, if I confess that I don't belong to a corps at all? And his lips said: "It seems to me unnecessary."

The paternal hand slipped from Jürgen's shoulder and came to rest on the Privy Councillor's hip. His belly seemed to climb up into his chest. His eyes asked: Then what do you want here?

At last he said: "Young man, it is only by belonging to a corps that you can learn the noblest of all lessons, one which will enable you later on to take your place among the leaders of your country: the hard but beautiful and lofty lesson of obedience, voluntary acceptance of authority, without which nothing in the world could continue . . . could continue. . . . The scars on the face of the member of a students' corps are a token that he has faced his opponent, blade in hand, for the honour of himself and his corps, and therefore that he will keep faith with his Fatherland to the last drop of his blood, if the day should come in God's providence when the honour of the Reich is at stake. . . . But apart from that: how do you expect to get on in the world? How else can you reach a position of influence and respect? Think of your father! He was my friend. We belonged to the same corps. He was indeed a man."

And as I've heard since, thought Jürgen, broke down and went to pieces because he did not reach a certain rank in his department of the Civil Service.

For half an hour, as he walked through the streets, Jürgen slipped on down the smooth path that the Privy

Councillor's words had opened before him. He stopped outside a little grocer's shop, where in the window was a plaster figure of a dwarf with a long beard, smoking a cigar.

Hatred and disgust for the Jürgen who had fought an imaginary duel in Carl Lenz's room seized him so suddenly and so violently that he had to sit down on the window-sill. "What a pitiable, repulsive, cowardly beast I am!" he cried to the dwarf in the shop-window. Every movement, every word of the other Jürgen tortured him as he sat, burning with shame, on the window-sill.

Adolf Sinsheimer swung round the corner, complete with patent-leather shoes, kid gloves, and carefully creased trousers. Still some distance away, he removed his silk hat in a ceremonious bow. Involuntarily Jürgen returned his greeting with the same ceremony.

"Great excitement in the Lenz family, hey?" remarked Adolf, when he learned where Jürgen had been. "Didn't you notice anything? Then they simply can't have heard. . . . Katharina's run away from home—went yesterday. Made a bee-line for the anarchists. Now she's making bombs. One way of passing the time! . . . By the way, d'you mind if I put my hat on again?"

"Why shouldn't you put it on again?" Jürgen was angry.

"I've had a full year. Been developing quicker than I expected. Been in the director's office some time now. Boss's right-hand man! And as for life in general, my dear fellow, I'm not taking up any girl unless she's got a perfect figure. Above all, good legs! Take my word for it."

What can one do?—He's growing up, thought Jürgen, and looked after Adolf as he walked lightly and smartly away. What is one to do?

Suddenly Adolf was standing in front of him again. "Leo Seidel's been to see me. Absolutely on his beam ends! My governor would have given him a job as a clerk under our book-keeper, but he asked what chances there were of promotion. What do you think of that? . . . My governor asked him whether he'd like a junior partnership straight away. That finished it—off he went. . . . I've found out since that he's running round to all the fellows he was at school with, to find out whether their fathers can get him a job with—don't laugh!—prospects of promotion."

Seidel had even been to see Jürgen, and Jürgen had proposed that together they should found a league of rebels. Seidel had replied that he wasn't such a fool as all that. The headmaster of the high school had informed Seidel that on principle he could not find another position for a young man so devoid of all humility as to throw away, out of sheer discontent, his prospects for the future.

For a few months Seidel had been employed as a ledger-clerk at Wagner's Bank. But even in that great banking house the remunerative positions were stubbornly defended, and the paths that led to them were twenty years long and led in a straight line between walls too high to scale.

He had soon seen that the employees there were not only impeccably conscientious but as sharp as a needle; there were no Hohmeiers there, and it was plain that no one who wished to become a banker should ever become—or, least of all, remain—a bank-clerk.

The consumptive postman and his wife were dead, and Seidel's four younger brothers and sisters had been placed in an orphanage.

The new tenants had already moved into the room overlooking the court, where Seidel's whole life, from the day

of his birth, had been spent in the same state of penury. He had been allowed to leave the ricketty old furniture in the wood-shed till he could find a dealer who would not think even the poorest article entirely valueless.

With the proceeds of the sale of the furniture, he had paid the last quarter's rent and the bills from the baker and grocer. Putting in his pocket the trifling sum that was left over, he went out one morning, his heart cold with energy, his will braced and purposeful, unhindered by depression, cowardice or weak reflections, and left the stinking court for ever behind him. There had never been anything beautiful there but a tuft of dandelion that had bloomed year by year, stunted but tenacious, in a corner of the paving.

Seidel's heart had never led him towards these yellow flowers ; free from the extravagances of emotion, it was a well-disciplined muscle ruled by his brain, which made his will both clear and purposeful. He stood homeless in the street, cut loose from the past, with nothing but the workhouse before him, utterly dependent upon himself.

A low morning mist, out of which rose the roofs of the nearest houses to his left and right, swallowed up the occasional passers-by and muffled all the sounds of the neighbourhood. A grey figure in the greyness, he was making clear to himself why there was no reason for him to be despondent : he had plenty of time, was young, healthy, and ready to go forward unscrupulously towards his goal.

In order to clarify the nature and extent of the goal he wished to reach, he examined in the light of his vivid imagination the position of a barber's assistant, who enters the shop of a barber's widow with the idea of marrying her and becoming the proprietor ; or of a young pharmacist who goes with his master's unattractive daughter to the registry office, and enjoys for the rest of his life a warm,

wedded security among the heavy scents and shadows of a chemist's shop. With an easy mind, he concluded that he too could enter some business or other, and in course of time work his way up to a position of modest comfort.

He thrust aside the idea of becoming a barber or a chemist, and turned his mind towards his career : at first it would be more modest and insecure than that of a chemist's assistant, but it would have holes and cracks and chinks through which he might be able to slip into a larger sphere ; thereupon his path would lead upward in the form of a spiral, surrounded by obstacles and difficulties, but ending at last on the Berlin Bourse. Then life would begin to expand : every word of Leo Seidel, the financier, would have weight ; his refusal to sign a document would cause anxiety and even financial disaster among the banking-houses.

•Seidel's eyes half closed. He whispered : " By my own strength alone ! None of my schoolfellows will be able to compete with me ; I shall leave them all behind, in spite of the fact that everything's been made easy for them."

He found himself on his way to the open space where tent-poles and wooden frames were being erected for the great annual fair, which was to open on the following day. He thought : A reliable man would show up well against the sort of riff-raff employed here ; I could soon find a position of trust with the owner of one of the shows. I shouldn't be like a cab-horse harnessed between the shafts ; there'd be all sorts of chances to break away.

His square, unusually broad forehead formed almost an equi-angular triangle with his sharply pointed chin. This triangle was thickly covered with the freckles of past summers.

Young men in faded jerseys, a cigarette behind their ears, tore up paving-stones, squatted, dimly wrapped in the

morning mist, on pieces of scaffolding, nailed, shouted and screwed wooden beams together. Everything fitted into its place.

If a man works hard and, above all, keeps honest, there must be more chances here than in any municipal office, thought Seidel, and accosted the proprietor of a set of swing-boats, who was standing in front of a great green wagon. He took off his hat. "Excuse me, may I ask whether you need an assistant in your business?"

The man looked in astonishment at Seidel's decent clothes and clean linen. "I don't understand. I'm looking for a couple of chaps to look after four boats. . . . But what do you want?"

"I'll do anything you like. . . . What do you mean by 'look after the boats'?"

"Manage the swings for me. . . . Two of my fellows were put in quod the day before yesterday. Eight weeks' imprisonment! They'd been thieving again. But that was before they came to me," he added quickly.

"Then you can find me a job?"

The man threw up both hands as though in self-defence: "My dear chap, have you got your papers in order? Ever done this sort of work before? . . . I want to know first whether the police are after you. . . . And above all *why* the police are after you?"

At this Seidel handed him his school-leaving certificate and his testimonial from the municipality, which contained a note concerning his ability, industry and conscientiousness.

The man was not surprised. During his forty years of showmanship he had come across people of every possible sort.

"You could rely on me to be honest in taking the money."

"Then you'd be the first I ever could rely on to take the money. But I can find something for you." Followed by Seidel, he climbed up into the green wagon, where the twelve bright swinging boats stood firmly packed for transport.

A powerfully built young man, with a leathern belt, a red jersey, and, on his cheek, a great plum-coloured, heart-shaped birth-mark, pretended he had been polishing the brass fittings. The proprietor sent him away.

"Here's your engagement money."

"I don't want any. . . . Those boats look quite new. . . . If you're satisfied with me, you'll pay me all right."

This was something new in the man's experience. He said, almost shyly: "Yes, I've got the most up-to-date swings in the fair. Cost me a fortune! It takes some getting back. They're six feet higher than any of the others. . . . Can you start to-morrow morning?"

Seidel hurried off to the second-hand furniture dealer and fetched the article he had refused to sell with the rest.

"The only thing that's any use at all! All the rest's just worthless rubbish," repeated the dealer, who had fought hard but unsuccessfully the day before for the possession of this article. "Useless rubbish!"

"How can it suddenly be valueless, when a large family has used it for forty-five years?"

The article was wrapped in brown paper. Seidel put it under his arm. An hour later he was standing in Jürgen's study. In answer to Jürgen's question, he explained in three sentences the kind of work he had found, why he had taken it and the object he had in view. "I want to get money, to get rich. Very rich. Richer than any of you!"

"By working on a swing? You, a man of such high character?"

"You'd never demean yourself to such a thing, would

you? What would people say? . . . But that's all the same to me. I have no choice! I can't afford middle-class prejudices and sentiments. I must have freedom to move, so that I can exploit every chance that comes my way. There are no chances for me in municipal offices or in any other regular kind of job. I'm not the son of a factory-owner. . . . I want to realise my ambition. And I'm going to realise it. And then I can go ahead without any scruples."

"Your hatred is really splendid. . . ."

"How is it splendid?"

"Well, I can understand your hatred; but money is not worth striving for. How are you better off, even if you are rich, when the poor are still as poor as ever, and everything just as it was before? Then at best you belong to the ones that are hated instead of hating. Who is the better off for it all?"

All the hatred that could be packed into a single human body gathered in Seidel's eyes as he looked at Jürgen—Jürgen, who had always been well dressed, never known hunger, who had bathed regularly and never experienced the humiliations of poverty. "What you say is nothing but words. You know very well what money brings!"

"In other ways I've always been as poor as you. People *are* poor nowadays. Everyone! Even the rich, I think. Terribly poor!"

At that Seidel could only curl his lips. "And what is your aim in life?"

"I don't know. I've no idea! . . . It's all unbearable. I say: The whole thing must be fundamentally changed."

"Well, then, I suppose it will be changed." As he spoke he stripped the wrapping-paper from the slimly built, polished sewing-table that had belonged to his mother. He asked Jürgen to take care of it for him.

"If you're cutting yourself off from your former life, why cling to that sewing-table? Sentiments like that can only be a hindrance to you, or to anyone with aims like yours. Or is it possible for unscrupulousness and sentimentality to exist together?" Jürgen could not have explained why he struck this blow at Seidel.

"The only happy memories of my childhood are linked up with that table. When my mother was doing her mending, I used to sit on the floor, and she let me play with the snippings." He took the drawers and pushed them into their proper places. . . . "Well, take care of it. . . . No doubt the whole crowd will come to the fair to see me working on the swings. Let them come!" His lips quivered. The freckles showed up more plainly because his face had grown so white.

Perhaps he will become very rich and highly respected, while if he had stayed in a municipal office he would have been respected but poor. . . . Purely external grades of rank: poor, comfortably off, rich, very rich, very rich and cultured, millionaire without taste and refinement, millionaire with taste and refinement, financial magnate—inwardly they are all the same. That is contemporary life. . . . And I? How is it with me? What am I to be? What do I want to be? What shall I be in twenty years' time? Jürgen found no answer.

The youngest member of the League of Rebels, founded by Jürgen, was a high-school boy, about to sit for his leaving certificate. He had declared, at the first meeting, that he must poison either himself or the history-master. He was not to be dissuaded from this by Jürgen's contention that, even so, there would still be a few thousand history-masters left alive.

A few days later, the two other members, half-starved young men of about twenty-five, who claimed to have been

all over the world as sailors and gold-diggers, appeared at Jürgen's home with a ring full of skeleton keys, and stated that, under their president's leadership and with the help of the skeleton keys, they could get hold of the week's takings of a master-butcher who always spent his Fridays out of the town. At this, the president, Jürgen, resigned from the League of Rebels.

Later he had a discussion with an elderly man, the owner of a bulldog and sixteen canaries that flew freely about in his room. His hobby was colouring postcards on which the design was ready printed, and he maintained that he held in his hands the threads of an anarchist organisation with ramifications throughout the world. In Mexico, he said, the trouble might break out afresh at any moment, ignited by two of his cipher telegrams. At the end of three minutes Jürgen broke off the conversation.

The question he asked of life still remained unanswered at the annual meeting of the Society for Hygiene and Infant Welfare, where the ladies agreed on principle that unmarried mothers and illegitimate children should no longer be admitted to their institution. Nor was he enlightened when the headmaster of the high school made a speech at the grave of the youngest member of the League of Rebels, who had hanged himself on the day following his failure in the school-leaving examination.

Eight times he visited the luxurious rooms, with their tasteful and impressive appointments, of the "School of Inner Perfection," where long-haired youths, short-haired girls, and old ladies festooned with diamonds, were recommended by highly educated persons to combine the best of Laotse with the best of Buddha and make this higher unity the guiding line of their spiritual lives. But one day Jürgen declared that the wisdom of this cult consisted in manicuring one's own soul and ignoring the

needs of other people; in fact that it was plain, straightforward egoism, and further removed from any form of self-sacrifice or devotion than all the nonsense of the man with the bulldog, canaries, and cipher-telegrams. At this, he was asked gently and politely to absent himself henceforth from the "silent hours of inner communion," which caused him to think with growing sympathy of the two hungry gold-diggers and their skeleton keys.

Jürgen was introduced by a student of philosophy to a dark young girl, very pretty and with an oriental cast of feature, who, without any sign of embarrassment, stripped almost stark naked and began to dance, stretching her thin fingers towards the floor and raising her ecstatic face towards the ceiling. For exactly one more year she was going to live withdrawn from the world, given up entirely to her art, then she would save humanity with her dances. She would dance in the churches. A black-haired young man sat in the corner and believed her.

Jürgen recognised that it would probably take a thousand years before life would be freed from every kind of barbarism and, in consequence, the habit of eating cut-up carcasses disappear; he saw that at present one's diet was only a matter of individual taste, and was by no means the best method of beginning, with any hope of success, a struggle against the present order or of bringing about the revolution he hoped for. Consequently, after one week, he gave up vegetarianism and reverted to the use of meat—to his aunt's immense satisfaction.

He wrote two plays setting forth that in the twentieth century a self-respecting person had the choice either of committing suicide or of consciously becoming a beast of prey. But six months ago he had burnt the manuscripts of both on a wooded hill. Lying beside the ashes, he had read a book in which a world-famous writer declared

that as soon as the "haves" voluntarily renounced all their possessions and gave up their power over the "have-nots," and as soon as everyone renounced all forms of deceit, humanity would be saved.

That may be true, thought Jürgen ; the only question is, where can one find the mouse to bell that million-footed cat, Humanity, and how are we to be made truthful in everything ?

On his way home, still searching and questioning, hopeless and helpless and afraid of leaving anything untried, he had paid a visit to four young men, who had come a short time before from different parts of Germany and, with the help of three girls, had founded a settlement near the town.

Jürgen had been filled with surprise and enthusiasm by the freedom and comradeship that existed between these bright-eyed girls and hard-working young men. He had admired their fine, enlightened attitude towards life, which came of the careless energy of youth and a humorous refusal to accept anything at all.

One of the settlers, who wore large round glasses on his thin, pasty, immature face, had overtaken Jürgen as he was marching homeward, happy and stimulated, through the darkness, and given him a handful of pamphlets. Among them was one written and published by the settlers themselves, entitled *Capitalism, the Universities and Free Youth* ; also a four-page propagandist pamphlet, *To Those who Think as We Do*, of which the first sentence began : " We have turned our backsides to the university, that capitalistic water-closet, and early this spring we borrowed money and bought a tumble-down farmstead, which, though at present heavily burdened with mortgages——" The last sentence ran : " Our settlement is a little island in a great stink."

This was followed by the neglect of his lectures at the university, by despair and threats from his aunt, by the handing over of his college fees to the settlers, who were badly in want of seeds, by laborious work in the fields and garden, and in the evenings by violent arguments that went on for hours, and stimulated and delighted Jürgen, though they often threatened the further existence of the settlement.

Day and night, open windows. In each room a camp bed, a suit-case, and nothing more. The brightly painted walls shone with blues and greens and pinks.

"Lili is coming down from the hills to-morrow with her baby."

How vital that sounds! thought Jürgen. . . . Coming down from the hills with her baby!

At first the settlers spoke, whenever they could, at meetings, and surprised and annoyed the townsfolk with their irreverent speeches against state and church, schools, marriage, property, and the whole swindle of interest and mortgages.

The anti-clerical *League for Free Thought and Cremation* had been struggling in vain for years to get permission to open a crematorium they had built. At a public meeting in support of this cause, the settler with the round glasses declared that, so far as he personally was concerned, he had no objection to all those present being cremated on the following morning, though he doubted whether the great stink would be noticeably diminished thereby. At this the *League for Free Thought and Cremation* drew the attention of the police to the settlers and their settlement.

Potato harvest, frequent dunnings for mortgage-interest, early autumn, shortening days, and discussions that lengthened proportionately and grew more and more violent. One day, the suit-cases, Lili with her baby, and

the settlers, had all disappeared, leaving behind them seven camp beds, folded up and stacked together in a shed.

The farmer brought back his chests of drawers, his oak cupboards that occupied the length of a wall, his vast feather beds; he covered the green, pink and blue walls with dark paper and hung up his pictures of the saints.

A few weeks later Jürgen received a postcard from the settler with the round glasses, who was now in Berlin. The settlement had been abandoned. Jürgen, he wrote, could imagine for himself the many good reasons for this step. Lili had not yet been able to make up her mind, but he himself had joined the Socialist Party. And that was that!

On those autumn nights, when an early stillness had settled among the smart residential villas, Jürgen would sit at the window, recalling his ineffectual searchings and inquiries, listening out into the darkness, where, from afar, he could hear the raucous notes of mechanical organs.

Fifty different tunes, played at the same time, produced a feeling of giddiness in many of the visitors to the fair, even before they had actually reached the ground. The beating of drums and the blowing of trumpets pierced effectually the general babel of noise.

Everything flew, sparkled, and revolved. Girls clung to their sweethearts and screamed shrilly, as the switchback hurtled down and disappeared among the pink lights of the tunnel. The dark crowd of human beings moved along the glittering, many-coloured lines of booths. All the criers were already hoarse, and solicited the patronage of the crowd with an almost touching politeness. Competition was very fierce.

None the less, Herr Rudolf Schmied had lain down for a nap in his big green waggon, leaving the management of his swinging boats, and the collection of the money, to

Seidel. A day or so before, at an early hour in the morning, when there was no proprietor and no other assistant to check the takings, Seidel had been in charge when a class of boys came with their teacher to use the swings. Seidel had asked the teacher to make out a form of receipt and had delivered both the money and the receipt to Herr Rudolf Schmied.

This receipt had worked like deadly poison on Herr Schmied's suspicions. The other employees decided that Seidel was probably a relative of Herr Schmied, so they subordinated themselves to him and handed over the takings without any trouble.

The twelve boats which comprised this lofty and handsome set of swings were always full and always in motion, while the set of seven boats near by, which were both older and lower, were scarcely ever in use. The assistants bellowed their loudest; the organ-grinder turned his handle like one possessed: the crowd pushed its way past to the higher swings.

Staring into the crowd, Seidel caught sight of Herr Hohmeier. With a look of indifference he ordered the young man with the plum-coloured heart on his cheek, who was generally known as "Heart," to stop the furthestmost boat, as its occupants had had their money's worth.

Another assistant, whose large and hideous face resembled that of a horse, was already raising his plank to catch the bottom of a boat, and cause it to swing slowly to a standstill. The boats filled afresh. Seidel collected the money. Herr Hohmeier kept his eyes on him with an expression of delighted malice, and his future bride also stared big-eyed at Seidel. Her little face was very thin and pale.

"The fat woman! Watch her eat and drink! Watch her sleep! Chest measurement sixty-one inches! All

the rest to scale ! Colossal ! Public allowed to investigate ! Chest measurement sixty-one ! ” yelled the crier next to the swings.

And another : “ Gee-up ! Gee-up ! Gee-up ! ” He pranced adroitly round a platform in full view of the public, pretending to ride a horse and inviting them to enter Eder’s Hippodrome. “ Come inside, where all can ride ! ”

A little, half-starved-looking showman carried on his shoulder a performing raven that constantly moved its head and legs and clipped wings. He said to Jürgen : “ Come inside and have your dearest wish fulfilled.”

Suddenly, as he looked unseeingly into the man’s starved face, Jürgen found himself standing with Katharina Lenz between the clipped hedges of Cornelius cherry. His aunt took him by the arm and led him away.

If only I knew what I wanted, he thought, I would go and find Katharina ; but I know no more to-day than I did then.

Suddenly there was a rush for the small swings ; the crowd fought in their efforts to reach them : the proprietor had put up a notice announcing that his prices had been reduced to half. He looked over jeeringly at Seidel, whose boats were now hanging empty and unmoving. Seidel hurried away to Herr Schmied. He rubbed his eyes in sleepy dismay and wanted to follow his rival’s lead and reduce his prices by half.

“ If you do, you’ll certainly get the crowd back, because our swings are higher, but your income will be cut down by fifty per cent. The swings won’t be worth running.”

“ But as it is I’m earning nothing. Put up a placard at once. Get Heart to help you.” He danced round with excitement.

“ Let me make a proposal.”

“ No ! No ! Be quick ! We’re losing time.”

"Are you willing to risk not taking another pfennig to-night, if you can get your full price to-morrow?" Herr Rudolf Schmied threw up his hands: "What? How? What d'you mean?"

"Let them swing for nothing."

Herr Schmied began to shout with all the force of his lungs for a half-price placard, and went on till Seidel had explained to him that his rival would also be compelled to give the public free use of his swings. It all depended, he said, on who could hold out the longer. "You're well off, and the other man's nearly broke. You simply wait till he comes to you and suggests that you both charge the full price again." Herr Rudolf Schmied's old showman's face began to shine.

Seidel called Heart, Horseface, and the other assistants into the waggon. Many hundreds of improvised tickets were quickly cut and stamped. And a huge show-bill announced: "Free Swings for All Ticket-holders. Rudolf Schmied's Swinging Boats. The World's Highest and Best."

Heart bellowed, and flung the tickets among the crowd. They stormed the boats. Seidel watched the rival set of swings; the crowd left them and they remained empty.

The babel was terrific. The two rival showmen, yelling across at each other, attracted the public from all parts of the fair-ground. Many of the other showmen came hurrying up to find out why their patrons had suddenly left them. In the front row of the crowd was Herr Hohmeier.

Fifteen minutes later the swings were working again at their normal price. Seidel had conducted the negotiations in Herr Schmied's waggon.

The proprietor of the switchback, the biggest attraction in the fair, came up to Seidel and put his hand on his

shoulder : " I want somebody to help me. Will you be my business manager ? . . . You did that fine."

" I'm working for Herr Schmied."

" I'll pay you three times as much."

" I shall probably start a show of my own to-morrow. . . . But I've got an idea I can sell you."

" What is it ? "

" I want it in black and white that you'll pay me two hundred marks if you take it up."

" A hundred ! "

" Two hundred ! "

Seidel pocketed the written promise. " Most of your passengers are young couples ; they like to be thrown together when the cars make a sudden turn."

" That's right. The switchback is built that way on purpose."

" Now about the tunnel : these couples like going into the tunnel. I've noticed that."

" Of course they do."

" The tunnel is lighted with red lamps——"

" Pink," said the man, with a portentous gesture.

" Get your mechanic to fix up a contrivance to break the contact, so that the tunnel will be dark for a second, then light again, then dark, and so on. . . . These sweethearts will know what to do."

Herr Rudolf Schmied came up to them with a beaming face.

Seidel went back to his work and beckoned to Heart. He was the son of a bankrupt showman, whose animals had all died on his hands. Seidel had found that Heart possessed a showman's licence and could open a booth of his own whenever he liked. A licence of this kind was very hard to obtain.

" What sort of animals did you have ? "

Heart shouted in great excitement : " A giant tortoise and a hippopotamus. They used to dance a minuet."

Seidel carefully considered whether a man with a face like a horse would be likely to have any attraction for the public. Heart agreed to contribute the licence ; Horse-face offered himself, and Leo Seidel provided the idea and the money. All they needed was a booth.

There was one standing unoccupied next to one of the chief attractions of the fair : *Herr August Schichtel's Variety and Magic Theatre*, which was crowded to the doors. Anyone who had the misfortune to be given a pitch next to Herr Schichtel found it impossible to carry on. For this reason the owner of the booth had not even troubled to open.

The half-starved old man, whose booth stood deserted and unnoticed on the other side of the Magic Theatre, held out his hand, palm upwards, in invitation, as Jürgen, now on his way home, passed him again : " Come inside and have your dearest wish fulfilled."

Being curious as to the kind of pleasures favoured by his former schoolfellows, Jürgen promised Adolf Sinsheimer to go with him on the first of the month to a particular sort of wine restaurant. So a few days after his visit to the fair, he walked up to the neglected suburban house where Adolf, three young clerks, and Herr Hohmeier, from the municipal offices, were already waiting for him beneath a red lamp.

From each of the five breast-pockets protruded a coloured handkerchief. The young men's faces were flushed or pallid. On all of them was printed the same feverish excitement and tension. Four of them had been together in the business-men's club, and having met Herr Hohmeier in the street, had brought him with them.

They wanted to pay a visit to a disreputable wine-shop, as a method of celebrating the first of the month.

"We'll have just one bottle together. Not more than one, mind—you promised," said Herr Hohmeier, buttoning up the top button of his frock-coat. He brought up the rear when Adolf, accepting the leadership, strode resolutely into the little bar that a week before had been a baker's shop.

The three electric bulbs were now covered with red paper shades; the shelves, where the loaves had been stacked, were sparingly filled with elaborately sealed wine-bottles, while the counter had been transformed into a bar, whose shining nickel top was lavishly decorated with artificial flowers and bunches of grapes. Behind this sat the landlord, reading the evening paper for the tenth time.

Jürgen thought he recognised in him a slave-driver, the hero of a pirate story he had read as a boy. He had the slave-driver's jet-black beard, great bald pate, and hooked nose. Only the whip was missing, its place being taken by the evening paper. Under his invisible guidance, the three waitresses, bright with rouge and silk, came up with the wine-lists.

The only visitor, apart from those who had just entered, was a cabinet-maker from a local factory. He was collarless and already quite drunk; his head swayed to and fro just above the level of the table; suddenly he threw it back and shouted towards an empty corner. "Hey! Come here!"

The eldest girl went to him and allowed him to paw her about a little until he produced a note and slammed it on the table. She stroked his hair—there were still bits of sawdust adhering to it—and winked to her younger sister, who brought him another bottle of wine.

Herr Hohmeier bent down over the table: "Just one! I think we'd better have the cheapest." And he placed on the table his share of the bill.

Adolf snatched the money hastily away. "That's my share," protested Herr Hohmeier audibly.

The workman stared stupidly at the fresh bottle of wine and then at the eldest girl. "Now you come here!"

Shaking her head, she smiled towards the group of new arrivals and winked at her younger sister, who went over awkwardly and shyly to the workman and let him draw her on to his knee. He put up his hand to her breasts and, when he found she had none, shouted: "Where's the other girl?"

"Aren't you going to treat us?" asked the elder sister, with a glance that met the eyes of all five of them at the same time. Adolf regained his poise. "Of course!"

She emptied the contents of the bottle into three glasses, and filled five other glasses to the brim, so that suddenly there were three empty bottles on the table.

Herr Hohmeier leaned forward and sideways in front of three of his companions, took a glass that had been filled from the first bottle and placed it portentously in front of him.

"Good, isn't it?" said the eldest girl, as Adolf rolled the wine round his tongue with the air of a connoisseur. He dropped some cigarettes into her hand and his companions gave her money to start the great orchestrion.

This instrument occupied the whole of the back wall and reached from floor to ceiling. It began to rattle, gave forth a clanking sound, and thereupon the little, red silk curtains opened and a coloured wooden figure, representing a lieutenant of hussars, moved jerkily into the foreground with a baton in his hand, and conducted a flute solo to a thunder of rolling drums.

The landlord stood, tall and immobile, behind the bar. His beard merged into the shadows. His bald head hung white and seemingly detached above the bar.

The workman mumbled to himself, poured out some wine, and continued to pour it into the overflowing glass until the bottle was empty. Then he plunged the neck of the bottle into the glass and, feeling that his week's wages would never enable him to compete with these smart young gentlemen who had just entered, cursed hopelessly into the empty corner. "Another bottle," he shouted desperately.

Almost at once the eldest girl was standing behind him, persuading him to give her the money. She pushed the coins back towards him. "That's not enough. Go home! You've had all you want."

He got up staggering and threatening. The landlord stood towering before him, and behind the landlord, the eldest girl, holding the workman's cap.

A push from the back sent him tottering out, robbed and exploited, all through his longing for something finer than his daily life, and for a woman with a fresh, young body who did not wear dirty flannel underclothes.

The eldest girl turned from the door and spread out her arms. "Tell me, what business has a working-man like that in a wine restaurant?"

Jürgen's companions echoed her question. She drew from the bosom of her frock some indecent photographs on which she appeared naked, in various postures, with a gentleman in a tail-coat. By this time there were nine empty bottles on the table. The girls' glasses were emptied as soon as they were filled.

"Of course we want more wine!" cried Adolf, letting the photographs slip through his hot fingers. "Of course we do!" echoed the others.

In a ring behind the bar was a funnel, and from the bottom of the funnel a rubber tube led to the neck of any bottle that might be placed beneath it. When the girls

had emptied their glasses into the funnel, the landlord placed a bottle at the end of the tube ; and thus the girls were able to carry the same wine back to the table again.

The orchestration played unceasingly. The heads of the four men were pressed close together, as they bent over the photographs ; till at last the eldest girl took them away. The word " champagne " was mentioned. Jürgen put a note in Adolf Sinsheimer's hand and left the place. The others scarcely noticed his going.

Suddenly Herr Hohmeier felt someone take him by the throat. The men and women, their bodies closely intertwined, swayed to and fro to the rhythm of the flute-solo. Champagne ran like water. The bottles seemed to fly of themselves from the bar to the table. For a full hour the champagne pursued its circular course : from the bottles to the glasses, thence to the funnel, through the rubber tube into the bottles again, and so once more into the glasses. At last the landlord, who had stood cool and motionless beside the funnel, signed to the girls to be careful.

They responded by gradually detaching themselves from their partners. The young girl still lay limp in Herr Hohmeier's lap. She was drunk. The landlord threw her a glance that sobered her.

A group of students came in, and sat down at the table vacated by the workman.

Herr Hohmeier's out-curved lips opened and closed. Suddenly he threw up his puny arms and sang : " Thus we live, thus we live, we always live like this ! "

The eldest girl was already standing at the students' table, smiling and shaking her head over the conduct of the other party, while she waited for an order. The students glanced round with amusement.

" I beg your pardon ! " said Adolf threateningly, not

recognising his former schoolfellow, Carl Lenz. The landlord strode out from behind the bar.

Herr Hohmeier was still singing : " Thus we live, we always live like this ! " The eldest girl presented the bill.

The combined wages of all five for a whole month was not enough to pay it. The table was half covered with wine and champagne bottles. Adolf produced another bank-note and threw it on the table, but the landlord, facing him from the farther side, said curtly : " Not enough."

They stood, swaying on their feet, helpless and humiliated. They turned to get their coats. " You must leave your ring as a pledge." The landlord placed the tip of his forefinger on the bill. The students watched the scene intently.

Adolf took a diamond ring from his finger. " I must have a receipt for that ! " And, in spite of his intoxication, he stared in surprise at the receipt, all ready prepared, which the landlord immediately handed him.

Step by step, the landlord followed his departing guests, closed the door softly but firmly upon them, and withdrew behind the bar, where he placed an empty bottle under the end of the rubber tube. This time the bottle had a red-wine label.

The eldest girl took a deep breath and allowed her bosom to subside. " These little clerks ! They want to play the gentleman and can't pay up." She spread out her arms : " Tell me, what business have people like that in a wine-restaurant ? "

Carl Lenz expressed his agreement, and at that his companions did the same. She filled their glasses with red wine. " Aren't you going to treat us ? "

" Of course ! "

Then he rose sternly and went out to the closet, where he removed the coloured band from his breast. In

accordance with the rules of the corps, his companions had left their coloured bands at home.

The eldest girl poured out nine glasses of wine: there were six students. Her younger sister was clearing the table where Adolf and his companions had sat, preparing it for fresh customers. The landlord adjusted the funnel.

No one would maintain that these are particularly elevated pleasures, thought Jürgen, as he walked home through the sleeping town; or that it is worth giving up anything for them—not even a fraction of a foolish ideal. No one could say that there are not more desirable forms of enjoyment.

Outside the little café in the main street, which was still fairly full of people, the cripple was standing. Beside him was his wife, grey, angry, immobile, with the sickly infant on her arm.

One could understand a man betraying all that was dear to him in his youth, if by so doing he gained possession of beautiful, dainty women, or achieved power and success.

And suddenly he recalled one evening when he had been the guest of one of the best families in the land; there he had met such women; there he had listened to powerful financiers who had talked in a light, conversational tone of international politics, railway enterprises and the probable date of the next war; he had heard famous writers dispute for more than an hour, very wisely, very wittily, with profound knowledge, over the beauty of a passage from Goethe, or even the construction of a sentence. That is power, that is culture—such had been his thoughts at the time.

But can this power and intelligence remove the ocean of tears? Can it remove the choking, choking misery of mankind? I do not believe it. But what is one to do? With a heavy heart he closed the gate at the end of the

garden, the gate where he had once affixed the signboard :
Alms given here.

The questions he addressed to life received no answer, except the facile answers of his old schoolfellows and his aunt. Often, when he saw how his former school-friends lived without doubt or scruple, he felt in his loneliness the same desire he had once felt at school, the desire to become like other people, to give up all this searching and questioning, and accept the point of view of his aunt. Jürgen thought of such times as these as pauses in his destiny.

He was seated at the window ; his head was still aching from the wine he had drunk, and he could still see before him the wretched little wine-restaurant. Swinishness ! he thought, and looked with passionate hatred at his aunt's lifework : the indestructible, crocheted covers that smothered every article of furniture. The pendulum ticked out peacefully " That's right, that's right." "

It's impossible to use the word " swinishness " in this room. The clock would stop ticking, the covers would slide from the table, chairs and sideboard, and the pictures of the saints would drop from the walls.

For a long half-hour not a word was spoken. His aunt went on crocheting. The eldest of the girls was showing her photographs.

" Swinishness ! " shouted Jürgen. He expected a revolution in the room. He saw his aunt's eyes bulge angrily, and a former scene repeated itself :

" What did you say ? "

" I only thought it."

" You're lying to my face."

" If only that damned clock would stop ticking ! "

She stopped him with an abrupt movement of her hand and pointed the crochet-needle straight towards him :
" When you've been appointed to the magistracy——"

The whole of his body turned to concrete resistance. "Never! I'm studying philosophy."

First she put aside her crochet-work, took up her embroidery, stuck the needle slowly into the frame from beneath and drew it straight up. "You know your father wants——"

"But he's dead. Dead!"

"—you to be a stipendiary magistrate."

His face was distorted by a grimace of laughter. In the pause that followed, he confessed: "I've been studying philosophy for a year, ever since I went to the university. I've never been to any other lecture."

She straightened herself, folded her hands in her lap with exaggerated calm and said: "If that were so, you wouldn't get another pfennig from me. So what would you live on? . . . Philosophy? What are you going to do?"

He looked at a lamb on one of the pictures of the saints. "Do?" The clock ticked: "That's right, that's right."

"Well, what? All your school-friends have made up their minds long ago."

Suddenly his helplessness was transformed into anger. He dropped on his knees, pressed both fists to the back of his head and shouted wildly: "I don't know! I don't know! A tramp! I'll walk the roads. I'll be a wastrel if you go on tormenting me."

Kneeling there, he stared at the cripple and his family, who were standing grey and wretched, vaguely outlined on a dark background. He saw even the sickly child on its mother's arm. Still on his knees, he hobbled towards that imaginary group, and so out through the door.

Not till he was upstairs in his room did his rage find free vent. At last he snatched up the wash-basin in both

hands and shattered it on the floor. His forehead was bleeding. The room was wrecked.

Gradually the sobs that had shaken his body subsided. He sat with arms crossed on the table, his head lying on his arms. Tears and spittle dripped on to the table-top. And so he crouched there.

Suddenly he pointed through the floor towards the picture of the saint in the living-room below, and cried aloud : " Take the lamb from the picture and place it at the feet of the cripple and his family."

In imagination, he heard Katharina Lenz say : " Poor Jürgen ! They've tormented him till he's lost his reason." He aped the voice of a child, pouted sulkily and tearfully, as he said : " You must put the lamb with the cripple and his family."

" How they've tormented him ! Now the poor boy's lost his reason," said Katharina sadly. •

And he went on acting his part : " The lamb belongs to the cripple and his family. . . . Baa, baa, baa ! " Weariness pressed his cheek down on to the table. Once more he raised his blood-stained, tear-stained face and cried senselessly and defiantly : " Baa ! " Then he fell asleep.

Presently his father appeared behind his chair, green and swollen like the corpse of a drowned man, tapped Jürgen on the shoulder and said softly, all the teeth exposed in his wide-open, smiling mouth : " Well, you ignominious nonentity." As he spoke, he turned the handle of the huge, thousand-voiced mechanical organ at the fair, whose notes sounded from the distance through the warm autumn evening.

The new lighting system was already in use in the tunnel of the switchback. The booth next to the Magic Theatre had been transformed with several coats of paint into an old stable, with hay trailing from the window.

Horseface's head had been suitably made up and looked extremely abnormal.

Heart bellowed into a great horn that Seidel had had made : " Come and see the man with the horse's head ! The world's greatest freak ! Eats hay ! Very fond of oats ! . . . Hear him neigh ! "

He blew a great blast on the horn and stared into the crowd with one hand to his ear : from the booth came the ardent neighing of Horseface.

For an hour Jürgen had been lying without moving on a wooded hill outside the town. He got up but, when he had taken thirty steps, dropped back on to the moss, tormented with unrest and helplessness. As he looked into the distance, his eyes followed the course of the river, as it wound through a far country towards the sea. He was completely filled by the wish to escape from the burden that oppressed him into a life of freedom. On his way home he felt himself drawn by the tunes of the mechanical organ, that awakened in him again, as it had done in his boyhood, a sense that here was liberty.

It is the same feeling that makes the privy councillor's six-year-old son want to be an engine-driver, he thought, and his eyes fell upon one of the booths. On the right was the word *Entrance* ; on the left, *Exit*. In the middle was Leo Seidel, sitting in front of a green wire cash-box.

At any rate, it was no such feeling as mine that put Seidel in front of a showman's booth, thought Jürgen. He was on the point of making his way through the crowd, ascending the three steps, and speaking to Seidel, but at that moment he remembered the history-book and their last talk together, and, changing his mind, left the fair.

Seidel did not notice Jürgen ; he was very busy. When the onlookers saw the movement of the hay that trailed out of the window, many of them succumbed to curiosity ;

they wanted to see a man with a horse's face eating hay, and thus the booth was always well patronised.

Seidel had in his hand the bills for oil-paint and interior equipment, for the large horn and the groom's livery, worn by Heart ; and in his head he had the idea that no one can get money except by making other people work for him. His small capital put him in a strong position, and at the end of the first week he offered Heart and Horseface the choice either of remaining partners and relinquishing all idea of earning money before the end of the fair—for the bills must first be paid in full—or of renouncing their partnership and being paid the wages of employees.

Heart shouted : " The showman's licence is all I had from my father ! " Horseface declared it was not everyone who could earn money by exhibiting himself as a horse-headed man, and it was no trifle to eat hay every day until midnight. The green wire cash-box, containing the week's takings, snapped to.

At that both chose to have their wages immediately, and Seidel became sole proprietor.

As he solicited patronage and took the money, he constantly pondered the question of where he could find a wider scope for his speculative mind.

His thoughts returned again and again to the huge brick building where a circus remained throughout the winter months, but did very poor business during the four weeks of the annual fair.

Seidel made use of the connections existing between several of the showmen and the circus proprietor, to suggest to the latter that for the duration of the fair he should sell family-tickets at reduced prices. Furthermore, he ought to have an up-to-date poster designed by a good artist, in place of the traditional and not very effective posters already in use.

The man would hear nothing of a change in his advertising, but claimed to have already had the idea of family tickets and to be on the point of introducing them. Seidel succeeded, however, in making one or two acquaintances among the circus performers, which were important for his future career.

Shortly afterwards Adolf Sinsheimer claimed to have seen Leo Seidel in a fur coat and top hat in the lounge of the Winter Garden Theatre in Berlin, accompanied by several smart women and music-hall artistes.

And so, a few years later, Seidel's former colleagues in the municipal office and his old school-fellows, most of whom by this time were young married men, were not excessively surprised when he returned one day to his native town as business manager of a great travelling circus. He stayed in the best hotel and drove round in his own car. He had not remained an impresario for long.

By this time Herr Hohmeier had just attained to a wider blotter and was thinking of marrying.

The proprietor of the circus fell sick and had an only daughter. She was seventeen.

Seidel had been engaged for some time in the wholesale wheat trade and then in pig-iron, but without outstanding success, and had therefore returned to the circus business, with which he was more familiar. A short time ago he had speculated very profitably in cotton on the Bourse. For years he had subscribed regularly to the technical periodicals dealing with economics, banking and finance.

He studied variations in market prices not after the manner of an industrialist or stockbroker, who reduces his risks by making his deals from day to day, on the basis of the market and stock exchange reports. For years Seidel had been comparing the upward and downward curves of the import and export figures of all countries; he had

carefully studied the political crises, both foreign and domestic, which resulted therefrom, and was rarely mistaken in his estimate of the approach of economic changes. It was this ability that had brought him his greatest gains hitherto, in addition to protecting him from losses. For some time he had been waiting, fully armed, for a situation which would enable him to engage in a really big deal without exposing him to more than a bare minimum of risk.

He was already so far advanced that he had a substantial hope of not being forced to marry the girl of seventeen.

CHAPTER III

"THIS is the Brod-strasse." The porter resumed his seat on his bench.

"Where Herr Sinsheimer, the button manufacturer, lives?"

"He's had a stroke. At midday to-day. One o'clock. Came in from business, read his letters and had a stroke. . . . Very sad for his family!"

Overcoming his fear of entering a house where a man was lying dead, Jürgen went up the stairs, past a stained-glass window, on which Wilhelm Tell was depicted with bent bow, ready to shoot the apple from his son's fair head.

In the hall of the flat a smell of stew was struggling against an odour of medicaments. "Herr Adolf is just coming," said the housemaid, and switched on a faint red light in the drawing-room.

Oak furniture, richly carved, black and immovably heavy, filled the room. Innumerable knick-knacks posed, mewed, sang or danced the minuet wherever there was a ledge or an inch of free space. Jürgen writhed his way through to a chair; its high back was formed by the black, polished, sinuous necks of two swans, and ended with a frog, wearing a crown on its head and seated in the cup of a water-lily.

Without moving, he examined the objects around him, and at last began to count them: four oil-lamps, each over a yard high—presents that had never been used—and a

great number of unused tea, coffee and liqueur sets. Then he discovered two additional tall, shining objects, which at first sight he took to be more lamps, but afterwards discovered to be epergnes : they were models of the Eiffel Tower, ornamented at different stages with apples, pears and grapes of coloured plush. On the wall, between a picture of a dachshund suffering from toothache, with a white cloth round its head, and that of a kitten playing with a tangled skein of wool, hung a small elephant that moved its trunk to and fro. The clock-face on its forehead presented a map of Africa.

Suddenly the idea occurred to Jürgen that the dead man might be lying in the next room. To distract his mind he took up a bronze lion, cowering stealthily with its paws on the edge of an ash-tray and its tongue lolling thirstily. He stood up, looked round, put out his hand for the electric-light switch. As the light went out, the furniture seemed to stagger drunkenly towards him before it sank into darkness. He could not find the switch again.

Then, with a flash of fear, he saw the corpse lying in the room before him, laid out snow-white on its bier, the head in precisely the same position as his father's. He turned round quickly several times, frightened lest he should find his father's corpse at his back, and put out one icy hand behind him towards the door-handle.

The elephant trumpeted. The door crashed against Jürgen's head : Adolf was trying to enter. "What's up ? Are you sitting in the dark ? . . . Lina ! Damn it all, Lina !" The girl came running. Jürgen tried to explain.

"That's all right. But why don't you switch on all the lights when a visitor comes ? . . . Bring some Tokay."

His hand found the switches. He strode angrily into the other three corners of the room ; more and more lights

shone up on the walls and the huge chandelier. The thousand objects that filled the room were dead in the white light. "There, now make yourself comfortable."

Jürgen sat down again on the chair with the swans' necks and, raising his glass of Tokay, uttered embarrassed condolences at the sad misfortune that had befallen his friend.

"My governor often has these turns. He's feeling better now. He's already had some fricassee, and now he's gone to sleep."

When the two young men had gone out, the maid went round from switch to switch and plunged the room again into black nothingness.

Out in the street, Adolf drew on a pair of kid gloves with seams embroidered in white; as he talked he made abrupt quarter-turns of his head and shoulders towards Jürgen, like a young lieutenant with a lady. That morning his father had been upset because of some payment to a bank in London. It had been a matter of a mere twenty or thirty thousand pounds. "A bagatelle! But if the cash doesn't happen to be there at the moment——?" . . . He had gone out early that morning to arrange the matter and came back quite upset, only to find a letter from the War Office announcing that—— He stopped and held up his walking-stick as though it were a candle: "In strict confidence!"

"Perhaps you'd better not tell me."

"Nonsense; your word is enough . . . announcing that we've been given the contract to supply the new buttons for the army. D'you realise what that means? . . . Well, there was another official letter waiting for him. My governor opened it quite unsuspectingly and found that he's been made a Commercial Councillor. That did it—a stroke. . . . After you!"

The former under-waiter, now promoted to the full

dignity of his profession, let the tray with the glasses of water swing smartly down on to the marble top of the table. His imitation of the head-waiter was now completely successful. Across the street, the button exporter's premises stood vast and still in the quietude of the evening.

A powerful touring car stopped outside the café and a young man with fair hair came in. Adolf bowed low and stiffly, and whispered: "Sixty horse power! Member of the club. Son of Heller, the machine manufacturer. . . . They've just built a new department for making railway-lines. Government contracts, you know. It looks as though they can pull the right strings as well as we. Immensely wealthy!"

Jürgen's spirit grew heavy at the thought of the time that had passed since he paid his first visit to this café, and yet his life was as confused and purposeless as ever. He looked absently at Adolf's shining face, at his pearl tie-pin, and the silk handkerchief that peeped, smooth and green, from his breast pocket.

"By the way, he told me yesterday at the club—I like to have a chat with young Heller—that he's kicked out the engineer who organised the new department for making railway-lines."

"I must get away! Away from Europe! Away from everything! . . . Perhaps I could get a job as an interpreter in China!" And suddenly, full of anger and derision: "Have you completed your button collection?"

"Nonsense! That was a childish idea. You just don't understand. Humanly speaking, there's nothing I'm less interested in than buttons. . . . I'm collecting something else."

He bent down with his lips close to Jürgen's ear, whispered, and leaned back again. "From every girl I've had! . . . I'll show you my collection one of these days."

"Why did he kick the man out?"

"Each one has a little slip tied to it with the girl's Christian name and the date."

"After he'd organised the factory!"

"Yes, and as soon as he'd finished, he tried to persuade the workmen to strike. A double-dyed anarchist, a crazy reformer, you know—bomb-thrower and all that! . . . He planned, built, selected, adapted, sweated and worked till the job was finished—they say he's a good organiser and knows the technical side. Then he started agitating. . . . There are still people like that about, in spite of our tremendous industrial progress."

"Have you ever thought that in spite of our industrial progress the great majority of people are overworked, and yet have scarcely the bare necessities of life? But above all they are entirely cut off from any chance of cultivating their minds, any chance of developing themselves. And yet there are others—you and I, for example—who can eat, live and educate ourselves, even if we do little or nothing."

"If you like to worry about that, it's your affair. Besides, *I* have to work. You should have seen how we sweated, my governor and I, over those buttons for the army! If you had to make the calculations for a huge contract like that, you wouldn't care a damn about other people's chances of development, whether they have none at all, or a few dozen less than that."

How is it, Jürgen asked himself, that one man thinks while another cannot achieve a single independent idea or opinion, so that he never reaches the point of protesting against the existing order? Does it depend on the mental constitution? Or on the way one lives, one's environment? Or on the sum of all these things? . . . That's a profound question, a difficult question to answer. . . .

And when one remembers that it is the people who do not think independently, those who have no mind of their own, who determine the present order and give life its present form, one must admit that the whole system—everything—is out of joint.

"Every button has to go x -times through the machine. Then you have to allow for raw materials, interest on capital and wages. If your tender's too high, you lose the contract; and if you make a mistake in such a vast calculation, you're broke."

Putting out his little finger, he drew the green handkerchief from his breast-pocket and wiped from his brow the moisture that was not there. "What did you say just now? An interpreter in China? Do you know Chinese then? So far as I know, there aren't more than about a dozen people in Germany who know Chinese."

"That's just why I think I could get a job as interpreter in China," said Jürgen, who had never thought of such a thing until ten minutes before.

"I've got a pretty good idea of Chinese," he began again, when they were in the street. "I've been learning it for years from an old grammar I found among my father's books. . . . For instance, I might be interpreter at the German embassy in China! Anything to get away from Europe!"

"I thought you were going to be a stipendiary magistrate? . . . Well, then, be an interpreter! That's all romanticism, old man, silly romanticism! . . . Well, you know my aim in life. In a few months we shall have the new export-house in addition to our factory. Sound business! Concentration, my boy! But you know nothing about it. . . . Apart from that, I live, amuse myself, and—to put it bluntly—add to my collection of women's pubic hair. Later on, of course, I shall—marry."

He was engaged to Elisabeth Wagner, the daughter of the banker and a former school-fellow of Katharina's.

The big car stopped. The son of the manufacturer got out and went up the carpeted stair. Jürgen and Adolf were just arriving at the club-house.

"It's not quite so easy as you imagine to get a government contract. Apart from the calculations, there are all sorts of other factors to consider, factors which—— For a thousand buttons," he cried suddenly in a loud voice, "the price is——" And he named the figure. "A hundred and eighty million have been ordered. . . . Work it out ! My late boss will go purple with rage when he hears of the Commercial-Councillorship. And on top of that—bang !—we've snapped the government contract off him. In short, we're going straight ahead, hell for leather. What do you say ? "

"Bang ! " murmured Jürgen. He had not been listening.

Then, as on a former occasion, the strumming of a piano and the sound of voices raised in chorus came through the open window. Adolf, both arms outspread, his stick in one hand and his gloves in the other, sang in an access of *joie-de-vivre* :

*" There were two lovers, so 'tis said,
Spent all one night together in bed.
I wonder what they did."*

As Jürgen made his way through the town, he followed Adolf's example and became engaged to be married. Katharina's father, Privy Councillor Lenz, broke off the engagement, because Jürgen was a penniless philosopher and did not belong to one of the duelling corps.

Katharina passed, leaning on the arm of her husband—a famous and distinguished personage—as Jürgen, drunken

and degraded to the gutter, was sweeping the street. She stopped, seized with compassion. Look! How terribly sad! He was my childhood's friend. Do give him something.

Her husband was very generous; he gave Jürgen the contents of his wallet, and Jürgen thanked him humbly, while the tears rolled down his worn cheeks.

Katharina sobbed, laid her hand on his as it rested on the broom-handle, and looked at her husband. Jürgen was not always like this. Don't think that! If only you knew how wonderful he used to be. How else could I have loved him? No, no, he wasn't like this. For instance, though he was only a subordinate interpreter, the government appointed him German ambassador in China on account of his unusual ability.

Suddenly Katharina's husband had vanished. She was married to Jürgen. He was receiving Chinese dignitaries in their wonderful, fantastic robes, and they bowed so deeply and so constantly that nothing was to be seen but their backs. The great hall had no roof. The starry firmament shone down upon the German ambassador's brilliant reception. The Imperial Chancellor sent Jürgen a telegram of thanks for his extraordinary diplomatic services. My greetings also to your wife.

Katharina, the Chancellor sends you his greetings.

I owe all this to you, Jürgen.

A woman's scream, the curses of a tram-driver, and the noisy clanging of a bell brought Jürgen back to reality. He found himself in a quarter of the town with which he was completely unfamiliar.

"If these abominable day-dreams don't stop at once, I'll shoot myself. They're nothing but onanism," he cried suddenly, his face distorted with rage. But his expression changed as suddenly to boundless astonishment, as he

found himself standing outside the house where the engineer had his lodgings.

Then he remembered that he had asked Adolf for the address, and had twice looked for the names of streets as he walked through the town; when he had found them, he had turned down by-roads, and once had even retraced his steps, without knowing why.

Besides, he thought, Katharina has run away from home, so she won't be affected by what the Privy Councillor says, and as he climbed the stairs he was immersed again in his dreams. He read the engineer's name, written by hand on a little white card. What shall I ask him? What shall I say?

But he had already rung the bell. A taciturn landlady, whose lower lip hung sulkily down to her chin, led him into a large, bright room. The engineer sat at a writing-table, his back to the door. "Sit down."

Jürgen sat down; looked at the vacant, bright yellow walls.

"In the arm-chair."

He got up and sat in a new, comfortable leather arm-chair, before a book-case crammed with books. Several piles of foreign newspapers lay on the shining parquet floor beside the bookcase. What am I to say to him? Damn! this is like being at school. . . . What do I want here anyhow?

He looked for a long time, reflectively, at the man's bent back, as he sat there writing. If I knew what I want, I shouldn't be here.

"In one important point, comrade, your article was bad. You should read Marx again on the class-war in France. There's also a very informative passage in Engel's *Origin of the Family*."

Jürgen determined to buy these two books immediately.

But he can't go on like this, he thought. He'll end by betraying some secret to me.

"Marx puts the problem like this," said the engineer, turning round. "I beg your pardon. I was expecting someone else, a girl who belongs to our movement." His mature and masculine face required a small pointed beard to finish it off. The beard was there. There was something unchangeably young in his eyes.

Jürgen stood up. The telephone rang. While the engineer listened and spoke and listened again, Jürgen rejected ten different means of opening the conversation. He wished himself well out of it. He heard the engineer replace the receiver. "Well, what do you want?"

"I want to ask what I am to do with my life," he answered. "There must be some reason for my being in the world." By his tone he might have been saying: "It was I who committed the crime; now do with me as you will."

His face was alternately pale and flushed. He was enraged at his own embarrassment, and looked angrily at the engineer.

"Yes, but you oughtn't to ring me up for every trifle, comrade," said the engineer into the telephone. Another call had come through.

I'll ask him whether I ought to study philosophy or, say, astronomy, and then clear out. It's quite impossible to explain the real reason why I came to him—all this misery and torment.

"We've just had the news," announced an assistant editor, sitting in a tiny editorial office on the fifth floor of the printing works, "that our government has decided to yield to the Spanish government's demand for extradition." He was holding the telephone receiver in his right hand and a hunk of bread in his left.

"That would be the first time such a thing has happened," replied the engineer incredulously. "The man's motive in shooting the chief of police was obviously a political one."

I can't say: What am I to do in order to reform the world? thought Jürgen.

"It's a well-known fact that political criminals are not subject to extradition."

The assistant editor put down the hunk of bread and took up a piece of paper. "The news is official and the shooting is represented as an ordinary crime. The day after to-morrow he's to be taken from here to the frontier."

If I go on as I am, and nothing happens to change things, the day will come when I shall simply choke in the viscous mud of life.

"I'll let the editor have a note down by midnight for to-morrow's issue."

He's right in the centre of the revolutionary movement, thought Jürgen, suddenly inflamed, and looked with shining eyes at the engineer. "Perhaps you can advise me what I ought to do," he said, as though he had spoken his thoughts aloud. "Show me the way. I'll do anything. I'm not a coward."

The Socialist agitator was known throughout the country for his writings; idealistic young men and women had often come to him with the question shining in their eyes: What are we to do with our idealism? He asked, with an assumption of deeper interest than he really felt: "Have you ever attended the workers' meetings?"—and propped his watch against the inkstand.

"I haven't. But a friend of mine has. . . . He founded a settlement. Now he's a member of the Socialist Party and he'll probably——" Jürgen flushed deeply: he saw that the agitator could scarcely suppress a smile.

"The settlement was quite communistic. . . . The

settlers simply couldn't endure things as they are to-day. They rebelled against everything, the whole system ! It's all a frightful shame."

" I'll hope you'll still think that in later life. If you do, it doesn't matter what profession you belong to. It's that knowledge and that belief that are important. I hope you'll never forget them."

" That knowledge and belief ? "

" As the years pass a man may forget what he knew in his youthful days of revolt, even though he felt and experienced it deeply."

Jürgen listened inward to his dark, emotional self. " I think I understand you," he said ; " a man can come to a dangerous pause in his fate, and so relinquish the struggle and betray all that he's been striving for."

The agitator took up his watch and put it in his pocket. " Time to be off. She won't come now. Probably the editor's sent her straight to the hall. . . . That's more or less what I mean. A pause in a man's fate. . . . How they make her work ! First she has to write her article and then go out and sell the paper."

" Then you become a money-grubber. And when you have shown yourself efficient for a time—that is, when you've been sufficiently brutal and thought of nothing but your own advantage—then—bang ! as one of my school-fellows says—you become a highly respected man, at the expense of the downtrodden and oppressed."

" It's these highly respected men that make up the ruling classes."

" By the way, I've found out why you lost your job. You are a Socialist, aren't you ? " When they reached the street, Jürgen asked if he might go part of the way to the hall with him. " So you believe that if we had Socialism everything would be fundamentally improved ? "

The agitator sprang on to a tramcar. "I believe that every epoch brings with it its own special problem, conditioned by the productive energies of the time, and to solve that problem is the task of all idealists, all who are ready to fight and sacrifice themselves. The task of the young men and women of to-day is to get rid of private property in the means of production, to transfer the means of production to society, and to realise the Socialist ideal by way of the class-war. . . . As for the young idealists of the middle classes, I believe that the true expression of their idealism—true for our time—can only be found in the fight for Socialism, carried on shoulder to shoulder with the working classes. . . . That applies to you personally. All other schemes for reform and liberation are mist and cloud in different-coloured lights. Our bourgeois opponents absorb and digest them—yes, they start them themselves and use them as a bait."

At that moment, seeing that the agitator was genuinely interested, Jürgen realised that the interest he had shown previously had not been quite genuine. This is the first time in my life, he thought, that a really serious person has given me a serious piece of advice, and I don't know what to do with it. I don't understand it. Transfer the means of production to society? He might just as well have said that the true expression of the idealism of a young man of to-day can be found only in learning to climb Mont Blanc without a guide or to say the Lord's Prayer backwards. Jürgen was sobered.

"It is the contrary that actually happens: the young idealists of the middle classes fight against the working class, against the realisation of Socialism, and thus against the next great step towards the liberation of mankind, against mankind's next great step towards finding itself.

Our young people fail to recognise their task, and so stray into the wildest aberrations."

Gradually, as the tram left the show streets, the wealthy quarters of the town, and penetrated into the miserable rows of bare, dilapidated tenements, the prosperous, well-dressed passengers gave place to the poor and ill-dressed. Now, crowded with workmen and factory girls, it bore its grimy load through a district where all the evils of poverty were unashamedly revealed. There were no more rubber-tyred carriages, no more motor-cars. The faint odour of perfume left by smart women was overpowered and consumed by the thick, sweaty smell of the poor. Where, a short time since, fresh, white faces had shone as clear as moons, grey faces hung now in the heavy air, skin-covered skulls with staring eyes, sunk deep into their sockets.

Two species of human beings : one had got out, the other had got in.

A tiny, pure white lap-dog, left behind by its forgetful mistress, stared wildly round the tram and barked at this strange alien species.

Jürgen noticed two mannish hands and when he looked up at the face that went with them, found that these great, cracked, horny, male fists belonged to a young factory-girl. Beside her, the body of an old, bearded postman swayed stiffly and unsteadily to and fro ; in his ravaged, waxen face was imprinted the effort of climbing, millions of times over, four flights of stairs.

"Now we're travelling into the heart of the social problem—by tram ! It is that last step, desertion to the working class, that the bourgeoisie will never forgive of its sons. For they know that it is only by taking that step that we can become dangerous. . . . Intelligence, Christian charity, the desire to help and change—all that is still

permitted by the middle classes. They still smile at it. They even lay claim to possessing it. For they are, in a manner of speaking, on the side of progress. But not the other thing! No actual change! They go mad at the very thought of it. Then they throw off the mask. Then they pursue us, imprison us and, in some cases, shoot us and bludgeon us."

The tramcar with its two trailers, packed so full of working men and women that they overflowed on to the running-boards, passed loose-knit bands of workers, all apparently hastening towards the same destination. Jürgen heard, over and over again, the name "Paradise Hall." The conductor came round for the fares.

The agitator, who had been looking silently in front of him, made a movement as though to shake something off. "There's nothing we can do." In answer to Jürgen's inquiry, he told him of the government's decision regarding the political murder.

"And what'll happen to the man?"

"He'll be executed."

"Oh—executed!"

They passed a troop of police, marching purposefully in closed order, roared past the grating of a sewer, round which slum-children were dancing in a ring.

Dozing factory-girls awoke with a start. All the passengers, joined by the grey masses that came streaming down the street, crowded into Paradise Hall, which was already overfilled.

The galleries and balconies were packed with human bodies, towering upward in tiers and resembling some huge vegetable growth. One expected them to collapse; but they did not. Tables covered the floor of the hall: a dense mass of figures, overtopped by thick cordons of people standing wedged in the gangways. Hands, gesticu-

lating excitedly, cut through the babel of voices and clouds of smoke that hid the paintings on the walls—paradisaal fields where every need was richly satisfied. *

Jürgen closed his eyes for a second, and suddenly heard and saw tremendous spuming masses of water, miles in width, pouring down from a blue height : saw ten thousand applauding human hands and in the far distance, on the platform, a man.

His heart swelled, and a feeling he had never experienced before, a sense of unlimited surrender, filled him completely. Sympathy for the man who held the trust of these five thousand hoping, trusting men and women. Devotion to them in their trustfulness. Deeply moved, he put out his hand to a young man selling newspapers, who was shouting : “ *Liberty ! Liberty !* ”

Hands grimed with labour snatched at the papers. The young man had to hold them above his head. “ One asked hesitatingly : “ How much is *Liberty ?* ”

“ Comrades ! Our common struggle, the class-war, the community of all whose social destiny makes us the implacable foes of capitalism, our common bond of class-consciousness, these are the inexhaustible source of our strength. A source of strength for each of us, a source of confidence in our own strength.” The speaker’s voice came from far away.

And Jürgen asked himself : Is that true ? . . . I must find out whether that is true and if so, why. The young man with the papers was struggling back towards where Jürgen was sitting ; the stack of papers on his arm reached to his ear. “ You haven’t paid.” And when Jürgen looked into his face in confusion. “ Twenty pfennigs ! . . . We don’t give them away.”

“ Twenty ? ” A man looked hesitatingly at the waiter, whose face was pouring with sweat, wondering whether

to buy *Liberty* or a glass of beer, as though it were impossible to have both.

Then Jürgen recognised a movement of the speaker's head, and knew him to be the agitator. He was speaking of monopolies, accumulation of wealth, surplus value, terms which meant nothing to Jürgen.

"Then there is the unearned wealth consumed by shareholders who do no sort of work in the undertaking from which they draw their dividends. I let my capital work, says the shareholder. He sits in his arm-chair, studies the markets, watches the stock-exchange as a spider watches a fly, lives smoothly and in comfort. He never steals wood from the forest or trespasses on the grass in the park; he's always on the side of law and order."

The five thousand sat perfectly still, watching and listening, as though they held the world in their hands.

"Men and women slave in the factories, year in, year out, early and late, from fourteen to sixty, performing one single movement all their lives; from their labours come tooth-brushes, locomotives, pins, ocean liners, typewriters, shoes, sheets. Meanwhile, in houses that are comfortable or smart, tasteful or tasteless, the gentlemen and ladies are sitting; their life-work consists of enjoying themselves, going to the theatre, talking sensibly or foolishly about art and literature, carrying on the traditions of civilisation, ordering their servants about, educating their children badly and marrying them well—people who have never set foot in any place of business, unless it be fashionable shops, champagne-bars, dance-clubs, brothels, or other places of nightly amusement. These well-cared-for contemporaries of ours have no notion of how tooth-brushes are made, of what a loom looks like, and yet they draw dividends from the brush factories and linen-mills,

while the children of the brush-makers do not even know that a toothbrush helps to preserve the teeth, and the weavers cannot buy sheets for their wretched, stinking beds."

My aunt has a strong-box, thought Jürgen, full of share-certificates, and all her life she has never done anything but crochet those frightful covers and antimacassars.

"And so it comes that if you walk through the shopping centres of a great city during working hours—at eleven in the morning, or four in the afternoon—a city that fumes and thunders with productive labour, you meet thousands and thousands of handsome, smartly dressed, well-cared-for girls and women and young men. These are the daughters, the wives, the sons. They do not work; but they eat—and something better than tripe or stew. They make their purchases, spend money—so that the workers can earn their bread, you understand? They live comfortably and hygienically, listen to concerts, are good dancers, and can, if necessary, learn by rote a few legal paragraphs, which, when they become judges and barristers, they can easily use against the workers. They belong to their husbands and fathers, who own the shares; they live on the surplus value ground out of the actual producers, and if they meet a procession of workers, they have at best an astonished, pitiful smile for the men and women on whose sweat and misery and death they live."

But they haven't the faintest glimmer that they are living on the sweat of these workmen, thought Jürgen. I'm sure of that. They are worlds away from such an idea.

"And the Church supplies the appropriate religion. Thou shalt not. Thou shalt, shalt not, shalt! In short: Property is sacred."

"In this world," said a workman standing near Jürgen,

with a cheerful smile. "In the next there'll be no big estates, mines, cotton-mills or furniture factories."

Suddenly Jürgen felt himself bound, as though by a miracle, to every person in that hall. These men's hatred was his hatred; their hope, his hope; their goal, his goal. And then it came about that the uncertainty and helplessness, that he had felt all his life in contact with other people, suddenly vanished, and there arose suddenly and mightily within him an invigorating sense of community with others, so that he had to restrain himself or he would have shouted aloud with exaltation.

And I've reached the age of twenty-four without knowing the meaning of self-reliance! I've never felt it! Never felt it because of my barren loneliness in face of an infamous social order that prevents the individual settling down into a satisfying way of life. Though, if he settles down, he is lost. However he achieves it! For to settle down happily in such a system means—however one does it—the destruction of one's human feelings. . . . Now the fight must begin. A fight to the death!

"*Class-War!* Current number! *Class-War!* *Liberty!* *Class-War*, current number!"

His heart stopped beating. He felt its last pulsation in his finger-tips, so violently that the blood might have spurted out of them. Thus he stared at the perspiring, compact face, the bent neck, the little firm mouth, which was calling: "*Liberty!* *Class-War!*"

Then Katharina had disappeared in the crowd that filled the gangway. He could see nothing but a copy of *Class-War* waving above her head. And in that same moment an endless procession of old men and old women, worn out by labour, passed, dim and grey, athwart his desire to stand as an equal at her side.

A few seconds later a home for aged work-people had

been founded. Everything functioned to perfection. All the newspapers published articles on it. Jürgen received a deputation from the corporation of Berlin.* The gentlemen carried top-hats in their hands. There were four of them. The slimmest and most distinguished had his hair parted from his forehead to the nape of his neck. He was the spokesman.

Certainly Jürgen would be ready to organise a similar workmen's home in Berlin. Why not? Of course he would first have to study the special circumstances on the spot. The local conditions, you understand? Moreover I must tell you that other local authorities have already made application to me. And first come—you know.

They bowed. But owing to their confusion and delight at Jürgen's having done them the honour of joking with them, their leave-taking was awkward and embarrassed. And the slim, distinguished spokesman said: Of course, ha-ha-ha! Of course, first come, first served.

And now, gentlemen—— The four councillors withdrew immediately. Even Jürgen's aunt, who had stood respectfully looking on, quietly left the room so as not to disturb him longer in his terrific labours. Katharina, leaning against his writing-desk, looked at him admiringly.

Thousandfold clapping of hands. The great audience pushed its way towards the doors. Sweating and enthusiastic, Jürgen was half carried into the street. There he found himself faced by reality, which had posted four policemen, silent and watchful, outside Paradise Hall. The slum children were still dancing round the steaming grating of the sewer.

Jürgen dropped down sheer from the height of his dream to the hard reality of the pavement, dropped into

shame and self-loathing, because he had been day-dreaming again, imagining himself admired and respected. With a wild, internal leap he landed back at himself again. I'll get rid of that habit ! I'll get rid of it !

The crowd swept him along. Jürgen unfolded *The Class-War*.

Workmen who overtook him as he read turned round and glanced at him. When he looked up, some put their fingers to their caps.

Evidently a stubborn, tedious, exhausting struggle ; but the goal, the goal—that was splendid. . . . I wonder whether I shall find out what was wrong with her article, thought Jürgen, and read Katharina's article again from beginning to end.

Suddenly, as he stood surrounded by the noises of the street, he distinctly heard the buzzing of a huge fly. Looking up in surprise, he found he was standing outside a notorious restaurant that was patronised by bullies and criminals. He had often passed it by and never dared enter, so deep had been his fear of it.

As he opened the door, the noise was so deafening that he felt he was entering an immense workshop. Even the strumming of the old piano was only occasionally audible.

The walls were bare and warped with age. Next to the door was the bar, and from this five long rows of tables, set very close together, ran back to lose themselves in the smoke and fumes. Not a single chair. Ten rows of benches, packed with prostitutes, bullies, stage people and workmen, incapacitated by age or accident, men who had once been members of various middle-class professions, now homeless, hurled down by fierce competition into destitution, without a temporary pause among the working-class. As a result of long unemployment, the great majority of those present had sunk irretrievably into crime.

Without breaking off their talk, they moved closer together, making place for Jürgen as a matter of course. Only a quick appraising glance to make sure he was not a police-spy.

A glass of beer was standing before him, and the waiter's hand was outstretched for the money.

No one was surprised to see a well-dressed visitor. It often happened that well-off pleasure-seekers, men in evening dress, sometimes accompanied by their women-folk, visited the place as a final sensation, when the dance-halls and night clubs had been closed.

The tense, agitated, greedy faces, the scraps of conversation, the wild gestures, the whole bearing of the patrons, revealed one thing above all others with absolute distinctness. Nothing was forbidden, so long as one took care not to be caught. The men and women who sat there had all, without exception, broken the fundamental law of middle-class society, which lays down that property is sacred. They stood for ever beyond the pale of law and order and, with the threat of disaster hanging always above their heads, were filled with a steely greed to suck the last drop out of life before disease claimed them, or the hand of the law. There were no secrets among them. Many could have brought others to penal servitude. But none did it.

Numbers of them stood in the shadow of the scaffold. What mattered was not to be forced to ascend it. Police-spies, however effective their disguise, would have been recognised at once; they dared not enter except in force, to execute a raid. Cocked revolvers. Hands up! That was the method by which, from time to time, the place was combed out. The place was a clearing-house for the executioner and the penal prisons. The landlord did not meddle with the private affairs of his customers. He drew the limits of freedom very wide, but they were not

to be overstepped by a fraction of an inch. He maintained order in the stormy uproar of the place. Jürgen was deafened.

The chucker-out, a huge fellow with a magnificent torso, standing unoccupied beside the bar, took two steps towards an old man who had just entered, grasped him in silence by the back of his coat-collar and between the legs, carried him silently to the door, and threw him out. Next moment he was back at his place again, standing motionless by the bar, his eyes on the crowded room. The man he had ejected was forbidden the place. He had once failed to pay for a sausage, and thus overstepped the bounds of what was permitted. His ejection had been seen by many, but none appeared to notice it. The babel did not die down for a second.

Opposite Jürgen were seated a man and a young prostitute, whose green hat, trimmed with the wing of a fowl, had slipped over one ear. Neither stirred. Both had planted their elbows on the beer-slopped table, where the knives and forks were fastened by a chain. The identity of their sullen silence told Jürgen that they belonged together.

To the man's right a woman was squatting in a mannish posture. Her whole face, even her forehead, was blue-black, like a thunder-cloud. Without addressing anyone in particular, she kept on saying that she was unemployed, and giving the reasons therefor. A consumptive-looking young man, also unemployed, curled his lips scarcely perceptibly, as though he had no longer the energy or desire to express his contempt in a smile. Slowly he sat up and looked at Jürgen, who recalled that that pallid face and hateful glance had confronted him several times at the workers' meeting.

A broken-down aristocrat, who had returned a few days

before from a stay of some years in America, said suddenly to Jürgen, speaking across the blue-black woman who sat between them: "I was walking down the main avenue yesterday. Why not?—Just out for a walk. All of a sudden I noticed a smart carriage standing there. Two horses. I know something about horses! Interested in them—still! . . . And who d'you think was in the carriage?—My mother. Terribly smart. At first I didn't know her. Well, I went up to the carriage. Why shouldn't I? It was only human.

" 'Where have you come from?' she asked. Just as if I'd come from a shooting-lodge outside the town.

" 'From America. Landed on Monday.'

" 'Have you some money then? You'll get none from me.'

" 'I haven't any money.'

" 'Oh!' she said, and signed to the coachman to drive on. . . . That's a disgrace. Don't you think that's a disgrace? . . . Five years!' He turned at once to another group of listeners.

The silent man sat up, drew back his hand without speaking and struck the prostitute in the mouth with his fist. Then he planted both elbows on the table again.

The girl had almost fallen backwards off the bench; she, too, replaced her elbows on the table. Both sat exactly as before, and maintained the same silence. Not a word had been exchanged. The quarrel lay farther back in the past. In a few seconds her upper lip swelled up on one side, giving a glimpse of her teeth.

"I was walking down the main avenue yesterday. . . Smart carriage standing there. . . ."

"Carriage standing there." Jürgen heard the aristocrat telling his story at the next table. A roar of responsive laughter drowned for a moment the general hubbub.

The aristocrat laughed with the rest. "... Just as if I'd come from a shooting-lodge. . . . Don't you think that's a disgrace ? "

" Let her have it ! Do her in ! "

Pale as a corpse, Jürgen watched the silent man and woman. The old woman with the blue-black face cried :

" For twenty years I've been carrying bricks. And now I'm out of a job. Why ? Why do you think I'm out of a job ? " The consumptive curled his lips. No one answered her. Many others were unemployed and knew the reason why. " Look out, here comes the mouth-organ quartette," she called to Jürgen.

He saw four men tapping their mouth-organs against the palms of their hands. One of them, a small man with unusually broad shoulders, an angular forehead and a pronounced squint, incited his companions by beating time with his left fist. The babel went on, as loud as ever. The man with the squint drove forward his three companions to a wilder and wilder tempo. The four torsos, the four in-drawn heads, swayed wildly to and fro. The faces were fiery red.

The bodies of three cripples swung to and fro between their crutches, as they moved slowly past Jürgen and the quartette. Under the leadership of the man with the squint, the pace grew still more furious. They had no time now to swing their shoulders ; they stood tense, as their heads twitched to the rhythm beat out with one heel by the man with the squint. The performance ended as though chopped off with a knife. The room was as full of hubbub as before.

Jürgen heard a dull thud : again the silent man had struck the girl's swollen mouth with his fist. Both were sitting motionless again, their elbows on the table.

The woman with the blue-black face spat across the

table, close to Jürgen's cheek. A thin white sausage-skin followed and flopped on the black floor near the patch of phlegm.

The silent man pushed the skinned sausage across to the girl, as though nothing had happened. She made no movement. Her split lip was as thick as a man's thumb and looked like a blue worm.

Jürgen had jerked back his head as the gob of phlegm flew past his mouth; now, suddenly grey all over, he watched a man, still young in years, bend down, recover from the floor the sausage skin, now covered with black sand, and stick it in his mouth. He forced it in with the whole palm of his hand, chewed toothlessly, and went on slowly searching the floor for refuse. He did not look at the men and women. Only at the floor. Apathetic, like a walking corpse. And when the silent man threw him the sausage the girl had refused, he did not attempt to catch it; he let it strike him on the chest and fall to the floor; then he picked it up. He had no socks, waistcoat, jacket or shirt. Only trousers and an overcoat. His eyes were rheumy and dead. His lower lip turned outwards and hung down limp and askew, as though he were incapable of moving it. With unequalled horror, Jürgen thought: This sick mass of flesh has no desire but one—to be given food; yet a savage or even the wretchedest dog can give and demand affection with a look. That is civilisation, he thought. Civilisation.

Hours passed and more and more people came in, hands in trousers-pockets, shoulders hunched up against the cold. Homeless. The chucker-out examined each pallid face critically, and during the night threw out two lads and a young girl, who let her arms hang helplessly as she went. The silent man shook the arm of the girl he had struck, as a sign that he wished to be friendly. I wonder what she's

been thinking all this long night, thought Jürgen. Remembering the events of her childhood? Or looking forward to what lies before her in the future? . . . And the assassin is to be executed.

The girl's elbows were still on the table. With a movement of her shoulders she shook off the man's hand, but smiled a crooked smile of compliance.

"Well then, half each," he compromised. "Hand over the money!"

A riotous, infectious song, to which the quartette played an accompaniment, thundered suddenly through the great room. All joined in. The man's lower lip hung down to his chin, limp and askew. He went on searching, bent down.

"It was only human. . . . Wasn't that a disgrace?" asked the aristocrat of the chucker-out, who, his eyes on the crowd, leaned against a cask of beer and said nothing.

I shall not solace myself with the thought that I can experience the beauty of a phrase of Goethe, thought Jürgen, as he strode eastward, where the delicate hues of dawn were already visible in the sky.

He approached a group of night-workers, repairing the tram-lines. They were putting out their acetylene lamps, as the grey daylight grew stronger. A foreman stood by in an overcoat, as with a sequence of mighty blows they drove an iron wedge into the road-metal.

Two men, who had the look of head foresters and appeared to have come from a party, stopped and looked on. "How well they're working again!" They went on their way. A few days before a strike had ended with the defeat of the workers. Jürgen also walked on. "In reality it's only these agitators," he heard them say. "The men themselves, on the whole——"

He left the town and walked down the river-bank. A

young man was sitting on the wall of a quay. This time Jürgen recognised in a moment the corpse-pale face of the consumptive he had seen at the workers' meeting and again in the beer-shop: a face where hate had been transformed into despair, and despair into indifference.

The consumptive whistled softly, as he kicked his legs above the flowing water. "Good morning," said Jürgen and sat down beside him, with his legs dangling over the river. From the other direction a one-armed beggar appeared. He, too, sat down, and began to count his money.

The consumptive whistled and blinked, with his head on one side, into the shining dawn, looked at the beggar and spat far out into the water. Then he went on whistling, indifferent.

Jürgen assumed the same indifference: "The river looks nice. Are you always here?" •

"Here, or somewhere else." He smiled mockingly. Then chose after all to be friendly: "Out of work. Since— Oh, the swine! I shit on 'em all." He stared in front of him again as was his habit. Then bit his teeth into an unripe apple. The acid contorted his face.

Jürgen asked cautiously: "Would you like to fetch something to eat? Sausage?"

The one-armed beggar was still busy counting his money. He sniggered as the consumptive went off with Jürgen's note. "You've seen the last of him. He'll never come back. Oh—oh, I know these fellows. . . . See this chap who's just coming up? Have a look at him. He's Herr Knipp. He reckons if he cuts down the work at his quarry to just as much as he needs to rub along on, he'll be able to live till he's eighty, without doing a stroke of work. So for years he's only had two men working at the quarry. And he's spent the whole time fishing. That's all he wants

to do—go fishing. Nothing but fishing! But he can whistle too, I can tell you. He's got a piano. He plays it without music and whistles. Early mornings. You'd never believe how he can whistle. It sounds like flutes and fiddles. When the men are going to work early in the morning they stop and listen. . . . And then he goes fishing. All day long and sometimes at night."

Herr Knipp had blown his nose in a leisurely way and was having a private, friendly joke with the worm that writhed on his hook. "Wait a bit, wait a bit. . . . You don't know what's coming." Then, content with the world, he watched the bobbing float. Herr Knipp was just forty-one.

"He'll never come back. . . . You'll never see that money again."

A moment later the consumptive reappeared in the distance, coming from a different direction from that they had expected.

"Now he'll say he's lost it."

"Twenty pfennigs' worth of bread. The sausage cost forty." He unwrapped a piece of sausage as long as his arm, and counted the change into Jürgen's hand. "Horse-sausage! It's cheaper. And better too." The one-armed beggar averted his eyes from the sausage and squinted down at the water, expecting that Jürgen would tell the consumptive what he had said about him. But when, instead of betraying him, Jürgen invited him to share the meal, there came into his hostile, lonely eyes the look of a foundling who suddenly hears that his mother has been discovered and is waiting at the door. For the first time for years a blush transformed his devastated face. He wedged his pocket knife between his knees, opened it, and cut off a chunk of sausage.

The consumptive chewed slowly, looking across the

river at the distant shadowy highlands beyond. Herr Knipp, with many thousands of days at his disposal, breathed timelessly.

The streets were still deserted. A cab was standing outside the prison, a black object in the half-light before the gloomy building. There was no movement of horse or driver.

Of course, of course! They're taking him away to-day. . . . Perhaps to anticipate any possible attempt at rescue.

A long half-hour passed before two policemen in dark, plain clothes came through the gate towards the cab, between them a beardless young man in a light brown suit. The one went round the cab, and they entered simultaneously from each side, as the prisoner was already seated within.

The only sounds Jürgen heard in the sleeping town were the clatter of the wheels and the beating of his own heart. The government has determined on extradition. At this moment the members of the government are asleep. But in that cab two official executioners are riding to the station with their victim.

Past the main entrance, along the rails to the shunting-yard, to a single passenger-coach that stood on the third set of rails. From behind the shunting-yard came the clash of buffer on buffer and the long-drawn shouts of the shunters making up the train. Jürgen watched the three men enter a compartment, saw one of the policemen get out again, walk between the rails towards the station buildings, and enter the refreshment-room.

Everything happened as in a dream. Across the rails. Into the coach. A little way down the corridor. A push to the sliding door, on which stood "No admittance." A leap on to the seat. And thence downward on to the

broad back of the policeman, as he stood looking out through the closed window.

“Quick! Run! Run! . . . Quick!”

The thin-faced prisoner was still sitting in his corner, motionless, as though this new development were no concern of his. He shook his head.

The policeman's efforts sent the breath hissing between his teeth. He wrenched one arm free. Snatched at the revolver in his pocket.

With all the gathered fury of his whole life, Jürgen hurled the policeman from him so that his head and shoulders shot through the bursting window-pane. Jürgen sprang from the carriage, across the rails, through the station-yard, along the house-fronts. He heard the trilling of a whistle, already far behind him.

With a calm step he went into an open yard, where several furniture vans and many other vehicles were standing, and sat down on a hand-cart. A number of hens came hurrying up to him.

The position is quite clear: The one was in the refreshment room; the other couldn't follow me because he couldn't leave the prisoner. Besides, I got away before he could free his head. As he thought thus, Jürgen crumbled a piece of bread he had found in his pocket and strewed the crumbs to the hens, which climbed and flew over each other's backs.

And now? . . . Now he will be executed!

Jürgen had already passed several cross-roads on his way home, when the policeman who had been in the refreshment-room came running across the station-square with a Browning pistol in his hand.

Jürgen was now in the clean, residential quarter of the town. Neatly dressed nurses hurried past him. Women, freshly bathed, in pretty morning frocks, were sunning

themselves in deck-chairs, as they breakfasted on the balconies. The gardens were full of scent.

I shit on all that ! The whole thing is base, thought Jürgen, and turned the door-handle. His aunt, annoyed because he had spent the night away from home, passed him without a word. On everything ! he thought, and fell asleep in a second.

And I tell you that's impossible. The slim, distinguished, frock-coated gentleman, whose hair was parted from his forehead to the nape of his neck, a little gentleman no taller than an inkpot, bowed, smiled with polite self-confidence and added : I am respectability. I am everything ; I am you, because I am in the back of your head.

You're standing in front of me.

And at the same time I'm hidden within you. I am I ; and I am respectability. I am everything ; I am you, because I am in the back of your head.

Then he woke up. It was one o'clock in the afternoon. His aunt was standing at his bedside. Without preamble, as though she were reading again from his father's last will, set down in her housekeeping book, she said : " Your father mortgaged the house where you were born, and the three tenement houses twenty years ago. I am the mortgagor. Even when your father was alive, the houses belonged to me. He left you nothing. So you oughtn't to let me go on keeping you any longer than is absolutely necessary. It's disgraceful. Get up and go to your classes ! "

He sat up, resting on his elbow, looked at his aunt, and for two seconds remained silent. Then : " I renounce your money. I'm here and I'm alive. The rest will come of itself. And now, please go. . . . Go ! "

It was not the words themselves, nor the meaning and

content of the words ; it was a calm, simple consciousness of strength, never shown before by Jürgen, that lay behind the words and dissolved the aunt's power over her nephew.

He dressed at once, and went out of the town, following the main road into the country. He looked back on his life as he walked on aimlessly through the hot white dust. His mind was burdened with a feeling that within the present hour was hidden the gravest decision he had ever been required to make, a decision that might split his life that day into two parts.

The old yearning to wander, which had been with him for years, the yearning for sea-ports and distant corners of the earth, the wish to escape from all troubles, all duties, walked behind him, drove him farther and farther down the road.

The sloping meadow to his left was burnt brown by the sun. The air quivered with heat. No labourers were in the fields. No birds were singing. The rays of the midday sun scorched vertically down on the empty landscape.

"And the lonely white road runs on along itself in the sunshine," whispered Jürgen. He seemed at that moment to have felt and discovered the deepest meaning of human life. He took one long look at the white road, stretching far ahead.

And turning, strode quickly back to the workers' meeting, whose announcement he had read in *The Class-War*.

CHAPTER IV

JÜRGEN collected the rents from the tenants of the three barrack-like tenement buildings, for his aunt had unexpectedly appointed him her steward. He drew up new leases, supervised the papering of a flat, and went, when he had time to spare, to his lectures at the university. In the evenings he attended the workers' meetings.

A new tenant asked to have the kitchen re-whitewashed. In his aunt's opinion, the kitchen was white enough. Jürgen had to arbitrate. He saw poverty face to face, as never before in his life. Against his will, he was a witness of outbursts of hatred between working-class husbands and wives ; he looked on helplessly when helpless, overworked fathers vented their rage on their helpless children ; when the bailiffs seized the last scraps of furniture. He had to demand rent from workmen's wives, in whose eyes anxiety and want were indelibly printed. Rent for one room—less than fifteen feet square—in which a man and his wife, two grown-up sons and two grown-up daughters passed their nights in three stinking beds, spent their whole lives.

The paperhanger had finished. Jürgen inspected the wall. The glaring red roses on the new paper came to life, revolved like a St. Catherine wheel. Tragic, this rose-filled room ! Many thousands of roses, and when the people live here—it stinks !

Outside the house, three pale slum children were dancing in a ring round a sewer-grating. In the middle a girl of four was kneeling, pulling the quaint face demanded by the game.

These children's lives seem to centre round the sewer,

as the lives of other children centre round a fully equipped playroom. Even at school I was unhappy at the thought that the children too are choked by the hand of poverty. . . And the children who walk out with their governesses, what of them? Mademoiselle Katharina, you mustn't swing your arms. Mademoiselle Katharina, you mustn't look round. You must close your lips when you breathe, Mademoiselle Katharina.

It was the hour when the slum children congregate in the hottest ardour of play, because by this time they should be indoors. The streets were filled with their cries. Hot, flushed faces. Tense boyish bodies, in an attitude of flight, breathlessly awaiting a pursuer.

They can swing their arms. They can look round, too. And they can open their mouths as wide as they like.

The evening bells rang out and fell silent. The workmen came marching homeward. The warm summer sky darkened into night. Lamps shone out. The day had been fine.

After all, the world is beautiful, but generally one doesn't realise it.

Many of the shops were still lighted up. From others, pale shop-girls were streaming out, looking up at the sky as they drew on their gloves. A beggar, whose crippled foot, like a degenerate hand, lay naked before him on the pavement, held up his cap to Jürgen. "Thou wouldst not have me suffer," came the happily tragic voice of a tenor, who stood in his shirt-sleeves at a fourth floor window.

Cars rolled up to the theatres and moved away again. Elegantly dressed women stepped out. A toothless human mouth cried: "Latest stock exchange prices!" The procession of men and girls, coming from workshops and factories, constantly grew larger as fresh groups emerged from the by-streets. All walked at the same pace. They carried Jürgen with them.

Across an iron bridge over the canal, where a bargee was stirring a stew-pan on deck. Past a lighted office, where the cunning, watchful faces of two wholesale cloth-merchants still haggled over a deal. The reek of stale fat came from the open doors of little restaurants and beer-shops.

The streets grew narrower and darker, the houses smaller. There were stretches of land still unbuilt; long, rotting wooden fences (a rat scuttled away), goats being led home, a shed, stench. A little window hung near the ground and shone red in the darkness. The door was not quite shut.

"... For it is the monopolists who hold the real power everywhere: a power so unlimited that even the schools, the pulpits, the press, public opinion, the police, the army, the judiciary, are under their control; the whole state belongs to them, and in every country the government is only their shadow, a shadow which, like the shadow of a moving object, participates in every movement of its master. Everywhere the monopolists are standing before the press-button, and their shadows are looking up at them attentively, prepared and compelled to declare war—war for sources of raw materials, railway concessions, markets, world profits—the moment they press the button." The agitator stopped. He was sitting on a kitchen stool under a wavering gas-jet.

Katharina's room was very low. The agitator got up circumspectly, lest he should knock his head against the gas-bracket.

"What you call fate's pauses, Comrade Jürgen, occur repeatedly, not only in the life of the individual, but in that of the proletariat as a whole, for the economic conditions which make it possible to replace the capitalistic, competitive, profit-making society by a proletarian society based on service, have been fulfilled for a long time. There

are situations in international politics when the working class can decide either for social revolution or for an imperialistic war which will cost millions of lives. The world's workers find themselves, over and over again, in this pause of fate. How will they decide on the next occasion ? ”

As he pocketed his notes, he introduced Jürgen to the other eight men who were present in the room.

The nine of them were ranged along the wall, standing or squatting on the floor or sitting on the window-sill. Two were smoking short pipes, containing a kind of tobacco whose dark blue smoke has a pleasant odour when inhaled out of doors by a passer-by, but bites like poison in a room.

Jürgen's eyes followed the agitator's look, as he said with a smile : “ I think you told me that you two have known each other for a long while.”

Katharina's face hung beyond the circle of light, in the shadows behind the typewriter. She looked over-tired. At her elbow was a grey enamel plate of cold cabbage, flavoured with cold bits of fat. A gas cooker and a narrow iron bedstead stood by the further wall.

The effect of the agitator's speech was perceptible in the room and visible in the faces of the nine branch-leaders.

A young wood-worker, whose shrunken, desiccated face resembled a dried fruit, said that he would not find it easy to explain all that clearly and simply to the comrades at his branch. “ But it must be simple or nobody will be able to follow it.”

The district agent, a dark-skinned metal-worker with a stubbly beard, stretched out his right hand, which lacked two fingers. “ You must stick to four main points,” he said ; he counted them off on his fingers, and so came back to the thumb again. “ And fourthly, we can do no

good against such a powerful *bloc* unless we have the strictest discipline and a very strong organisation."

An elderly cardboard-box worker was sitting on the floor beneath the window-sill, with his back against the wall. His one hand was at work, ceaselessly, independently, pushing invisible objects half an inch to one side. It had performed this action all his life, from morning till night, in the paper and cardboard-box factory of Herr Hommes, and he could not stop it even in his leisure hours.

"You needn't worry. The comrades at your branch will understand you all right. A man can't fail to understand a thing that's been branded into his flesh all his life," he said, and sat on his hand. In a few seconds it freed itself and went on with its work.

"Comrade Lenz, you've spoken at four meetings of the Women's International Conference this week, and apart from that you've had other work—committees, writing and so forth. You must ease off for a day or two."

"I only need sleep. Five hours."

"Yes, yes, sleep," said the cardboard-box worker and sat on his hand again.

Katharina turned her head towards Jürgen. And it seemed as though she had brought back into her eyes that look she had given him in the public gardens eight years before. She smiled, and behind her smile was the answer to the question he had asked then: But how? How is one to sacrifice oneself?

"The extradition wasn't carried out for five days."

Then Jürgen heard the metal-worker say to the two pipe-smokers: "The plain-clothes man that fell with his head through the window lost the sight of one eye and couldn't make the journey." He went over to the three men in the window-corner. The agitator had joined them also.

"If they get hold of him, he won't get off under five years," went on the metal-worker.

The wood-worker with the dried-up, shrunken face remarked: "It said in the paper: 'A well-dressed man of about twenty-five, a clerk or a student, apparently without a hat.'"

And the agitator: "The detectives have been down to our offices again to-day. . . . You can't hammer it into the skulls of these romantic policemen that the modern workers' movement exists for some other purpose than organising outrages and rescuing assassins."

I had my cap in my pocket, thought Jürgen. And asked: "What did you say?"

"The feeling of revolt that drove this young man to attempt to rescue the fellow is the same feeling that's alive in all of us, but we often have to suppress that feeling, hard as it is," went on the agitator. He was looking straight in front of him, and by his tone of voice he seemed to be thinking how much easier life would be if the struggle for Socialism consisted of deeds of that kind instead of the year-long, life-long effort of daily devotion.

"Yes, and then there's the educational course, twice a week, in the young people's organisation," said one of the branch-leaders from the further wall. Two others were talking of the last wage-strike, which had seriously weakened the transport-workers. From the floor above came the cry of an infant that seemed to die back upon itself.

Jürgen felt, beneath his breast-bone, a pressure that grew stronger and stronger, as though he were buried to the chin in the viscous mud of a moorland swamp.

"Shall we start?" asked the agitator. And Katharina lifted the cover from the typewriter.

The ten men strode on through the darkness; in front of them the windowless backs of towering, detached tene-

ments : dead silhouettes. A long goods train crawled out of the working-class suburb into the open country. In the shadowy distance, the gleam of water and the muffled sound of a tug, towing a chain of freight-barges towards the town. The long whistle of a locomotive rent the night.

Shouts broke out in front of them, grew louder : a confusion of infuriated bellowings. Above it all, a woman's voice, screaming like desperation itself. And when the ten men reached and passed the cone of light that fell on the street from the ground-floor window, complete silence had been restored within. Oppressive silence. Then whimpers, cries, a spasm of jerky sobs, uncontrolled, as though a desperate woman were weeping all her misery out of her soul, were weeping out her very life.

A discussion arose about this. Had a man been beating the woman ? If so, why ? And why had she cried so piteously ? " We all know the reason," said the wood-worker.

" Yes, it's always the same at bottom."

" What a lovely night ! "

" Yes, when you can get out like this."

The new brick tenements of the growing workmen's suburb, uniform, bare, as though set down overnight—straight streets, ending suddenly as though chopped off with a knife in the middle of the fields—gave off a damp smell of lime. Not a window was lighted. The occupants were all asleep. Outside an old villa, overtaken and surrounded by the growing town, stood a policeman with a dog.

The sound of crying had died away. The men's steps echoed rhythmically.

" But I made up my mind to join the party—that's twenty-six years ago now," said the cardboard-box worker.

" Things have changed a good deal since then."

Twenty-six years ! thought Jürgen. Twenty-six years !

High, shining windows, five long rows of them, one above the other, appeared out of the darkness. The ten men walked into the clip-clap of heavy leather belting : the night shift at work.

"Now our movement is a power in the land. . . . Even though it moves slowly. . . . A voice in the management. . . . Rigid organisation. . . . Yes, took a lot of work." Jürgen, walking a few steps ahead with the wood-worker and the metal-worker, heard these broken scraps of conversation.

In silence across a little iron bridge. Through a cool smell of tar. At the extreme end of a boarded-up freight barge, on the canal, a little dog stood watching them. Here and there an ocean of light burst through the tops of the trees.

Jürgen could not breathe freely. It was as though his lungs had been filled with air and hermetically sealed : he could only breathe from his throat. It means standing permanently outside of life, being only a tiny part in a great movement. Never being more ! The pressure in his breast did not yield. They mingled with the crowd that was leaving the theatres and streaming towards the Corso. It was just ten o'clock. People were sitting in the open air outside the cafés. Even in front of the Grand Hotel there were elegant women and men reclining in basket-chairs, enjoying the lovely summer night. On the gleaming wine-terrace, festooned with flowers, and separated from the street only by a row of laurel-bushes, dumb waiters were being pushed noiselessly to and fro, poultry was being carved, wine-bottles opened. The waiters stood bowing stiffly, like living question marks. A string quartette made discreet music.

Four arc-lamps above a jeweller's shop-window were spraying white light into the crowd—students, young clerks, visitors to the town and officers with their *cocottes*

or ladies—who sauntered up and down at so leisurely a pace that the ten men had the effect of a perambulating intrusion. They stopped outside the jeweller's. All ten of them. Jürgen with his eyes on the wine-terrace.

Suddenly he felt a blow against his heart. He said to himself twice: "It's not that. It's not that." He looked down at his clothes, convinced himself that he was properly dressed, and turned to the shop-window again.

"Well, see you to-morrow!" called the wood-worker over his shoulder, and smiled familiarly and yet strangely.

The notes of the first violin sprang out of the accompaniment, turned a somersault, sparkling and unexpected, and soared jubilantly upward. An isolated thought was still wandering round in Jürgen's head; repeatedly he repulsed it, but it cried noiselessly and shrilly: a pause of fate! "It's not that. That's of no account," murmured Jürgen, and drew on his gloves.

Not till he was seated at a white table on the wine-terrace, facing two pretty, taciturn Englishwomen, did he notice Adolf Sinsheimer and three other old school-fellows of his. They were leaning back languidly, showing their silk socks. Slowly they inclined their bodies forward in greeting to Jürgen. He went and sat with them.

Six hours later he was standing in the street. The birds were already singing. The people were still asleep. "Well, and what now? . . . I've been drunk."

Shaken with disgust, he thought of the scene in the "Oriental Salon," where he had been with his old school-friends. He looked at a blackbird on a wooden railing. His knees grew soft. He had to sit down on some stone steps. "The whole thing is of no more, and no less, importance than my imaginary duel with Carl Lenz."

The blackbird opened wide its yellow beak. "That's true and yet it's not true."

"You mean that the day will come——"

"That's what I mean."

Jürgen had a feeling of dropping into the depths, and started out of his doze. "If this goes on, the day will come when I shan't be able to decide anything for myself. Fate will not offer me any more pauses."

That afternoon—they had just finished their coffee—Jürgen looked thoughtfully at his aunt as she dozed in the arm-chair. He leaned back in his own arm-chair, his cheek on the crocheted antimacassar.

The pictures of saints on the walls held their hands upraised, as though in blessing, above the pair. Even the bird in the cage sheathed its eyes for sleep. The glass balls in the garden, blue, gold and silver, as large as a man's head, shone in the afternoon sun. A cloud moved tranquilly across the sky. The pendulum said: That's right, that's right.

A wire, thin as a thread and many thousands of yards high, stretched from Jürgen's comfortable arm-chair, above the heads of all those who are needy and struggling in the world. Each held his tormented heart in his hand. There, where the wire ended—in the far, far distance—was Katharina's shining room. In that blue, perilous height the nine proletarians were moving towards Jürgen, and they waited for him so trustingly that he could not help mounting the giddy, thread-like wire.

A few yards ahead a man was swaying on the wire, threatening every moment to fall. Jürgen recognised this dangerously swaying figure as his own, and called to himself in cold terror.

Then he was marching up the Corso with the nine workers; he saw the promenading crowd, the four arc-lamps showering light from above the jeweller's window. He heard the string quartette and recognised the tune.

The pause of destiny occurred.

"Well, see you in the morning," said the wood-worker.

What photographic exactitude! In my dream I even saw the yellow rose in Adolf's buttonhole, though yesterday, in real life, I was quite unaware that he had one, thought Jürgen, dreaming that he had awakened. He stuck the rose in his own buttonhole.

He was sitting with Adolf Sinsheimer and his three former school-friends on the wine-terrace. Suddenly the four bodies combined into one, with all four heads on its neck.

All four faces have the same obscene trait round the lips, thought Jürgen. Like men who see a defenceless woman in the street. That look that shames the human eye and that no animal ever wears.

All four mouths uttered simultaneously a terrible word: a human cry, caught in the arches of a cellar. Then the four-headed thing took from its waistcoat pocket a small kitchen knife with a brown wooden sheath, and forced open the top of Jürgen's skull.

It tore out the great mass of his brain with its hand. What adhered to the skull it scraped off carefully with the kitchen knife.

While this was happening, Jürgen, paralysed with boundless horror, heard the notes of the first violin in the wine-restaurant, as they soared jubilantly up the scale.

The four-headed thing unwrapped from its careful packings a new brain that had the maker's trade-mark affixed to it, like the label on a champagne bottle. It pressed this into Jürgen's open skull and fitted on the top of the cranium.

His pain and horror vanished immediately.

His schoolfellows were all separate persons again now. Jürgen sat with them, making the fifth, spoke like them,

thought and laughed like them, had the same obscene trait round his lips, the same look. He knew all this, but was not troubled by it.

Only the human cry in the arched cellar disturbed him; it went on sounding like a captive song. So he emptied at a draught a big white coffee-pot, filled to the brim with champagne. Suddenly he was standing in the "Salon" with its oriental decorations, where five half-dressed girls were lying on sofas. He recoiled with a shudder as he saw that their breasts were covered with a short, thick growth of hair. And awoke in reality.

The bird and his aunt were still asleep. And the cloud, moving tranquilly across the sky, had not yet passed the top of the nut tree. The same fly was still on the white coffee-pot, sucking the same drop that hung from the spout. As though his emotional life had absorbed in that second the decision that was to give a different direction to his whole future, his physical feelings had suddenly changed. His gait and limbs had grown heavy. Past events and the environing world had lost weight.

Jürgen, resolved to take his life in his own hands, left the villa, grave and single-minded, never to return.

He realised emotionally what he was taking on himself. That emotional realisation weighed as heavily upon him, as he took the first step away from the garden gate, as though it had been active within him for years. The past had dropped away. There could be no retreat.

Katharina called to him through the closed door, asking him to wait a moment. She went quickly from her work-table to the centre of the dark cross of beams that divided the floor into four parts. Both hands in the pockets of her woollen jumper, she stood still, looking appraisingly round the large ground-floor room. The flowered wallpaper, older than Katharina herself, was covered with round

discoloured patches ; in many places it had been torn and stuck together again with stamp-paper. Only one of the gas-jets on the double bracket was lighted.

Thoughtfully she passed her thin middle finger along her brown curved brow, and at the same time moistened her lips with the tip of her tongue, as she had done years ago when, one evening, she had stood in her room, and decided to leave her parents' house for ever. She had immediately carried out that decision.

Now, too, she made the same double movement, as though she had made up her mind ; then she lighted the second gas mantle, closed the window, from which the locomotive works and the winking red and blue lights of the shunting-yard could be seen in the distance, and drew the curtain. There was no other means of beautifying the room.

It was quite still there now, cut off from the outer world. Only her heart was thumping. Half-way to the door, she turned back again and sat down, her hand on her heart, full of wonder.

Behind the closed door Jürgen was standing, heavy and calm.

As soon as she had opened the door, she put both hands back in the pockets of her jumper ; then, seeing immediately by Jürgen's glance that his visit was not due to the cause she had imagined, she took them out again.

He did not give her his hand. He sat down heavily at the table, and began telling her, without preamble, objectively and without shame, as though he were describing the experiences of some other person, what had happened to him the day before. As she spoke, his hand lay heavily on the table, making no gestures to emphasise his words. In an effort to explain himself and the events of the day before, he narrated the main stages of his earlier life, and, even then, he described the sufferings, the humilia-

tions, the uncompleted struggles of his childhood and youth, as though he were speaking of someone else.

And so, as she was warming the soup on the gas-stove, which stood on a small low box, so that it was often necessary for her almost to kneel, a discussion began about the individual and his environment.

Once, years ago, before she had become a Socialist, she had imagined what would happen if a whole generation were born, not as helpless infants, but as mature young people of twenty, unbroken by false education, authority and environment, and had appeared thus on the battleground. With all the power of their unperverted minds and hearts, such a generation would have made short work of things.

"Unfortunately, we come into the world as defenceless children," she concluded, and smiled happily, as though this defencelessness were the best thing that could happen to a child. Her heart was thumping no longer.

She took pains to cook as well as possible, asked whether he liked his porridge thick or thin, sweet or less sweet.

"I don't mind a bit. I've never eaten porridge." He watched her, as she moved about, as she bent down almost to the floor and then stood upright again. Firm and smooth as the trunk of a young tree, of a young nut tree, he thought.

She stood bent forward at right angles over the gas-cooker. Henceforth you will often have to eat porridge, she thought, as she cautiously carried the two over-full soup-plates across the room to the table, which stood before the window.

Jürgen was deeply absorbed in summing up his previous experience, sufferings and knowledge; he was willing and prepared to act from now on with a clear consciousness of what he was doing; at that moment, as he looked back over his life, he was setting out on the path towards him-

self, and he needed to think over the causes, to attempt to realise how they had combined to produce their effect.

He thought : The insanity of the existing order makes it inevitable that Socialism will completely conquer every department of life. That must be true. And he said :

“ We have not only a ruling class with other classes subjected to it, we have also a particular generation in command at any specific time, and this generation is composed of members of all classes ; it is the adult generation, which, in full enjoyment of power, makes use of the existing, soul-destroying social order, in which it has itself been fatally enmeshed and submerged, to strangle the rising generation, to rob it of individuality. . . . In this sense all adult persons form together one granite unit, a wall, against which youth hurls itself in vain until it also has lost its individuality, has become a generation of living corpses, and forms part of the wall against coming generations.”

She stood farther back, rubbing a spoon, looked at it, went on rubbing, breathed on it. The tin-plated, iron spoon refused to be polished.

“ For if it is a fact that everyone is born a pure ego, it is also an undeniable fact that the pure ego is completely undeveloped, completely submerged and destroyed and effaced in the twentieth century bourgeois. . . . But what possibilities are there of developing the ego in a child of the proletariat ? How do environment and proletarian parents behave towards the ego of the proletarian child, and *vice versa* ? ”

She had never considered the question. Katharina got up again, rummaged for some time in a drawer and then placed a paper napkin in front of Jürgen.

“ But that’s a very important question. If our ideas are correct, they should apply in this case also.”

"Probably the answer depends on the fact that there is a ruling class and an exploited class," said Katharina. "Perhaps we should pose the question like this: What does the bourgeois child receive from its environment in return for its surrender of the power of protest, of its most fundamental possession—its ego, its creative power and its ability to experience life even on the mental side? What does it get in exchange for its submission, its adaptation to environment, its absorption in that environment, by which it becomes the opponent of those who still wish to protest? And what does the proletarian child exchange for the surrender of its creative ego? What happens to the bourgeois child, when it attempts to struggle and protest? And what happens in the like circumstances to the proletarian child? Are both repaid with the same measure? Do both suffer in the same way?"

They heard someone spring from a bicycle and prop it against the wall. A moment later, a young workman came in, sweating and breathing hard, but with a tranquil smile. "All the men from the Hommes paper-mills have come out on strike, Comrade Lenz." He wiped round his neck with his handkerchief. "The engineer sends word that you are to be at the office of the paper at seven o'clock to-morrow morning." As she nodded, he was gone.

She called him back, and asked whether the workmanagers and foremen had come out.

"What! Do you expect those arse-lickers to strike? He's trying to bring in blacklegs from outside. But we've got our men out on picket-duty. They're down at the station too. The police have come on the scene, of course."

"I should like to go on picket-duty," said Jürgen; "against Herr Hommes."

"The comrades from the mills are looking after that."

They sat down again. And in answer to the question in Jürgen's eyes, she went on :

"It is obvious that Nature constantly breaks down the artificial division of human beings into classes, overcoming the frustration of men and women, which results from the capitalist system, by producing physically and mentally splendid children of bourgeois and proletarian parents. It is equally true that separation into classes has a totally different effect on a bourgeois child from what it has on a proletarian child."

Jürgen suddenly lost that sense of emotional heaviness. He breathed with a sense of liberation. "No one knows better than you and I," he said, "what happens to the bourgeois child, when it refuses to adapt itself." His eyes shone with delight at the personal freedom he had achieved with so much difficulty. "A man or woman whose mental health is endangered for the rest of life—suicide, or the madhouse! Or, at best, a quivering bundle of nerves at thirty! . . . And for the others, the great majority of bourgeois children, who give up the struggle against their environment without an effort, the unwillingness to protest, the surrender of individuality, the adaptation, represent comfort, an easy victory, unlimited opportunities of culture, a smooth rise to a favoured position, a desirable marriage, wealth, power and the respect of others—in short, the full enjoyment of life. . . . They give up their ego, but in exchange they are given all life has to offer." He pushed his plate, which was not quite empty, to one side.

Katharina's landlady came in through the inner door, and placed a ewer of water beside the narrow iron bedstead. "Is the comrade sleeping here? The last 54-tram has gone. . . . Then I'll bring in a blanket."

"He's not sleeping here," said Katharina. "No, no; he's not sleeping here."

And Jürgen went on quickly : " The adaptation of the bourgeois child to the present system is therefore equivalent to enjoying life fully as a member of the ruling class. The person who has thus adapted himself is no longer, of course, his real self ; he is the mere corpse of his ego, but he is respected, powerful, authoritative ; he helps to determine the life of his time and has every opportunity to enjoy it. A corpse that lives, and lives well ! In our struggle for freedom, we can certainly expect no help from that quarter."

" But when the world is faced," said Katharina, " with children who, in contrast to the bourgeois child, can receive, as the price of adaptation, nothing but want, pain, ill-usage of every kind, the denial of all means of education and enjoyment—nothing but hunger, cold, filth, the necessity to labour for others, and humiliation at every turn, what then ? . . . The proletarian child who is willing to adapt himself to his environment is repulsed by that environment itself—that is, by the ruling class and the social order they have built up, and driven into revolt against his environment. This brutal, continual repression gives the proletarian child the possibility of retaining a little more of his ego. The proletarian never quite issues from a state of revolt, consequently he can never entirely lose his ego. It is partly for that reason that, as a class, the proletarian is creative, and is destined in the course of time to rise above the bourgeois class, which has become uncreative. . . . But it is only in a society that knows no classes that the pure ego will be preserved ; only in such a society will each individual be allowed to become and remain himself."

Jürgen saw the four-headed monster, and slowly raised his head, raised it out of the network of ideas in which he had been enmeshed. As he looked at Katharina he

formulated his thought : " You mean that on the one hand, in a capitalist society, there is a monstrous inequality in a material sense, and perhaps a still more monstrous and imbecile equality in a mental and spiritual sense——"

" Yes, and that is called individualism."

" —on the other hand, in a class-less society, there would be equality of material goods, and as a result—am I not right?—as a result, a complete differentiation of every individual from every other. Each a pure ego! A creative human being!"

" And that is called the barren equalitarianism of Socialism. . . . But between these two extremes lies the revolution."

" How unspeakably wonderful that will be : the mind the ego acquires through the body, and that lives in harmony with itself."

Both were silent. Through the quietude there came again the cry of an infant that seemed to choke back upon itself. From far away came the clang of buffers and the monotonous shouts of the shunters, as they made up a train.

My attempt at rescue was a splendid way of kicking over the traces, he thought proudly, and smiled, suddenly moved, as though at a precious memory of childhood. In feeling, he rejoined the ranks of the millions on their long march that would continue for generations.

" Your room—with that low ceiling and little window—is like a low-browed face," he said, and suddenly the pressure came back over his heart.

" Yes, we live buried away, with no protection but our own strength and our idea. . . . Are you sure now that the idea is true?"

" You ought to know best. It was not the pressure of poverty, which makes the masses class-conscious, that

influenced me. I had to come to Socialism partly by way of reason. The emotion was there before, was always there.” •

“ Fancy our finding each other again, you and I ! . . . How beautiful, how wonderful that is ! ”

His joy struck right through him, placed his hand round her neck. Thus he stood, his eyes on hers, his lips close to her small, firm mouth. Her body yielded, responded freely.

Then said Jürgen, half questioning : “ I don’t know where I shall sleep to-night, or at whose house.”

CHAPTER V

“ . . . And lest you should think I've had an accident or been drowned or murdered (as a matter of fact I have saved myself from being drowned or smothered), this is to tell you that I have joined the Socialist Party and am determined not to come back.

“ A short time ago not the wisest man in the world would have been able to persuade me that by taking this step I could bring my life into harmony with the facts of existence ; and so I cannot explain to you my reasons for this step, any more than I could explain them to Herr Hommes, Privy Councillor Lenz, Herr Wagner or the professors and students at the university. All those clever, educated people of your set regard Socialist workers as rogues who want to equalise and divide everything up, to live in idleness and get drunk every day ; and they look on those who join the Socialists as weak-minded enthusiasts, fools or criminals, even as traitors to the ideal.

“ If I tried to explain to you that Socialism, apart from its strictly economic aspect, is also a great cultural movement, which must be realised, if mankind is not to decline completely, I should have to write a long book, and even then you would be little the wiser. For even people who think as I do can only realise the greatness of Socialism and its historical necessity, when they have taken the small but needful step of going over to the working class, of living and fighting side by side with the workers.

“ I have taken this step. Don't be unhappy about it.

Believe me, my dear aunt, nothing else could save me from the most terrible of all deaths, the death of the mind. This step is the only salvation for any of us.

"And believe me, too, if ever I should return to those who have been struck blind, whose sight could only be restored by an operation, I should be a traitor to myself and a traitor to the great idea. I should be lost, like all other young men and women of the middle class, whose virtues are pruned at home and at school to the proper degree of moderation, thus guaranteeing a satisfactory career. Any idealism that may still be left over in their minds is, at the university, completely diverted from active self-sacrifice to what is considered the realities of life. They are filled with rigid, false, traditional ideas and made to serve the state, whose institutions are vigorously directed against those people whose hands maintain the existence of the state and create the wealth and civilisation of the land. It is the workers who provide the middle classes with education and the means to devote themselves exclusively to the labours of the mind, albeit of a falsified and sterile sort."

Jürgen crossed out the last sentence, and sent the letter to his aunt.

He had been living for some months in a tiny room, which communicated with that of Katharina. The window, blown askew by the wind, looked out on a rat-haunted yard, where domestic refuse and all sorts of rubbish had lain rotting and stinking for years, and where, all day long, twenty slum children were building up their world.

Katharina and Jürgen kept house together. One by one, his suits, his watch, his shirts, had been transformed, by way of the pawnbroker's, into wood and coal, potatoes, sausage and bread.

One day his aunt had seen the name of Jürgen Kolbenreihier mentioned in connection with a public meeting of workmen, who were in conflict with Herr Hommes, the paper manufacturer. She had seen it in the evening paper, sandwiched between abuse, mockery and calumnies, and wreathed with commiserations for the highly respected, old patrician family, which had provided the town with a mayor in the fifteenth century. Since that day her letters, pleading that Jürgen should be reasonable and remember what he owed to himself, his position and his education, had suddenly ceased.

The strike of the paper-workers had not been unsuccessful. They had obtained a small increase in wages, and permission for the nursing mothers, employed in the cardboard-box factory, to suckle their babies for five minutes three times a day without any reduction in their wages. Four pickets, who had become involved in a fight with police and imported blacklegs, were still in prison, having been sentenced for assault with violence and for creating a disturbance; two others had been badly injured and were still in hospital. Herr Hommes had subscribed a sum of money "for charitable or other cultural purposes."

Time passed. Jürgen often spoke at public meetings. For a year he had been in charge of the instructional course at his district-branch. At night he was writing a little pamphlet, an appeal to young men and women of the middle classes. Even now his heart stopped beating when he thought of the events that had impelled him to write this appeal to youth.

Fifty thousand workers had demonstrated outside the government building, claiming freedom to choose whether their children should be given religious instruction in the schools or not. Round the crowd of workers was a cordon

of police and, behind the police, a great body of students, called out by the professors to demonstrate in favour of compulsory religious teaching.

Unless the students are willing to surrender their own intellectual integrity, they ought to support the workers in their demand for freedom of thought. What are the reasons why, to their shame, they did not do so? Seeking these reasons, he sat at the kitchen table that served him for a desk. The light came in from his left. By day, he was glad of the light that came in from his left, and, in the quiet of night, of the gas-jet that he had mounted above his desk, with the help of one of his comrades and a piece of tubing.

When all were asleep and only the gas-jet hissed, the rats came out to play in the yard, and one heard the clear tinkle of a little bell that a boy had hung round the neck of a rat.

Katharina is breathing in the next room and I love her. One cannot expect much greater happiness from life! He touched the pencil gently with his lips, because Katharina might take it one day in her hand.

In these nocturnal hours, when the little bell tinkled in the silence, and the sentences shaped themselves smoothly, Jürgen felt himself an organic part of the process of life.

On the day of the demonstration before the government building, Katharina and three young comrades had succeeded in slipping through the police cordon and distributing hand-bills, amidst the jeers and blows of the students. The public prosecutor had charged them with disturbing the peace and incitement to class hatred. The three young men had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment, and were already in prison. Katharina, whose cross-examination and final speech had been reported by the newspapers as a sensation, together with

many expressions of profound sympathy for Privy-Councillor Lenz, was to go to prison on the following day.

Jürgen went on writing till far into the morning. He did not knock at Katharina's door till he heard her moving within. Katharina was not yet dressed. As they stood, prolonging their embrace, her dirty-yellow, long-haired dog got up from the corner, walked slowly towards them, and stood in front of them, his eyes on the ground, as though nothing could happen without his participating in it.

It was just five o'clock. The first ray of sunshine fell on the window-sill, broke, danced obliquely along the wall and lost itself in the corner.

She had to be at the prison by eight. Dressed only in her chemise, she sat on her two hands on the edge of the bed. The dog was after the rats in the yard.

Later they talked of other matters. He was to fake care that collections were made for their three comrades. The mother of one of them would be without food as long as her son was in prison.

"After the exam I'll get an administrative job in a big factory. Then we shall have a regular income and can take a better flat. And I shall be still closer to the workers than I am now. We'll get married to avoid unnecessary trouble. . . . We are happy together, so happy! . . . A year will go by, five years, twenty years, and still we shall be together. Think of all the things that will happen to us. Countless things! We're companions for life, Katharina. What happiness! . . . As soon as the exam's over I'll get a job."

As a girl of seventeen, instead of learning to paint flowers and enthuse over Buddha, Katharina had begun to study the law of surplus value and the concentration of capital. Now she asked how he was going to get a job

in any big works, when he was known to be a left-wing Socialist and his name had often appeared in the press.

"Well, then I can't!" They looked at each other, till the same smile broke on both faces and they were again at one.

"Your eyes, Katharina! Oh! Your eyes!"

What unspeakable happiness a little thing like that can give to a woman, she thought.

On the way to the prison-gates, they lived through an hour of perfect unity, such as is given to two people only when their love is deepened by a common devotion to an idea. They walked absorbed in their feeling.

"Life can be beautiful beyond all conception." With an outburst of joy, she threw her arms round his neck. Then turned away, rang the bell, and was swallowed up by the black gateway.

"What is loneliness? . . . Gentlemen, there is no loneliness. There is not even separation!" Jürgen exulted. And went back to his work.

A man may live in wealth or poverty, he may be forced to move from a warm, carpeted room to a garret with damp walls and rotting planks, he may gain success or suffer the heavy blows of fate, garner honours or fall into contempt and shame—always his dog clings to him with the same constancy. So unreasonable a creature is a dog, thought Jürgen. There is only one thing it cannot bear: separation from the man or woman it loves.

Katharina's dog, hitherto lively and high-spirited, gave up on the second day its restless questionings, gave up looking at Jürgen, refused to eat, lapped a little water now and then and crawled back to its corner. Jürgen had to feed it by force.

His appeal to middle-class youth had been published. The dog seemed on the point of death, and the last time he visited the prison he determined to take it with him.

With his fat belly and little red head, the prison-governor looked like a black fish standing upright on its tail. He was a full-blooded man of fifty, polite and reserved, and for some minutes he refused to allow the dog to enter the prison. He shrugged his shoulders regretfully, turned up his eyes in horror, and interspersed his explanations and questions with a series of correct smiles—not the smiles of a stern prison-governor, but those of a man of heart and conscience, who was unfortunately bound by his duty and the rules of the prison. At last, however, he gave the necessary permission, and, suddenly bending down, patted the dog with a melancholy smile. Then, as though he had gone too far and suffered Jürgen's presence too long in his room, he bowed abruptly, and immediately afterwards the corners of his mouth were drawn back in the same melancholy smile, and his eyes turned up in horror.

As Jürgen climbed the worn stone steps with the dog at his side, he felt quite convinced that sooner or later the prison-governor would end up in a lunatic asylum.

On the first floor, there was a pungent smell of latrines. The wardress—a lipless mouth, thin as a line, in a firm face—unlocked the door. They went through a great hall, where twenty cells, six and a half feet wide by ten feet long and six and a half high, stood side by side. Their walls and ceilings were composed of a close network of stout wire. Between them were gangways, as in a menagerie, and in every wire-cell a prisoner. Women, young girls, and, close by the entrance door, two old women of seventy in two adjacent cages. All in grey, sack-like garments. Empty space between the tops of the cells and the ceiling of the hall.

Several of the prisoners started forward towards the life that came from outside; pressed their faces against the wire cages. Staring eyes. A girl of seventeen, with a

ravaged face, beckoned with her forefinger and thumb, and cried twice: "Doggie!" The dog wagged its stumpy tail. •

"She's doing it all day long," cried one of the old women to the wardress. "The young bitch has always got her fingers up her clothes."

They passed through the farther door, into a long corridor, at the end of which a gas-light burned red. Left and right, cell-door on cell-door, each with an observation window.

Before the wardress had selected the key, the dog planted its fore-paws on the door. Its mouth opened, its tongue appeared, the tip curled upward.

With a whimper it slipped forward between their legs. It was impossible for Katharina not to speak first to the dog. Its love was more tempestuous. So tempestuous that it could not stand still for long under Katharina's caresses, but had to race to and fro from window to door, slipping at each turn on the smooth concrete floor.

Even the thin, lipless mouth revealed teeth.

They had only taken each other's hands. Jürgen could not sit down. The bed was strapped to the wall all day.

"I had a mental specialist here to-day, sent, of course, by my father."

The wardress stood by the door, without leaning against it, and looked unseeing in front of her.

"It comes to this, that my father would rather have his daughter insane than endure the shame of her being a Socialist. . . . I didn't even let him talk; I sent him out again as soon as he came in, which did not, of course, convince him of my sanity."

The dog was somewhat pacified. It lay panting with open mouth, its fore-paws stretched out, looking at the concrete floor, convinced that its troubles were over, that

either it would stay where it was or go away with Katharina. She, too, was dressed in a grey linen sack, but she had made it a little more sightly by tucking in the hem at the neck.

At the first word from the wardress the dog got up and barked. Katharina's assurances that she would come home in a week were useless. The dog braced all four paws on the ground, and Jürgen had to drag it from the cell.

"That's not allowed." The wardress pointed to a faint shadow, which indicated beneath the sack-like garment the presence of a woman's breasts. "Every time he comes to visit you, you play this trick!"

Katharina unfolded the tucked-in hem, and the sack lay close again about her neck.

"You can't wait till you get out, eh? . . . Report to the Governor." Katharina heard the words. Then the lock shot home.

Jürgen was half running across the yard, trying to reach the men's side before the visiting hour was over. Suddenly he stopped: two draught-horses entered the gate, drawing a van, a van with a boarded top. A strong iron frame stuck out at the back of the van, like a pair of railway lines, secured by an iron cross-piece at the top. The coachman whistled. The van rolled on through a second gate, which opened as it approached, and entered the yard on the men's side; thence it passed through a third gate into the yard of the penal prison. Next morning there was to be an execution there.

In that same second Jürgen's body had lost all power of feeling. He tried to turn back, lest in his present state of mind he should be a burden to his comrades, but he had no control over his will. His legs carried him on independently towards the door. So he walked, weak at the knees,

down a corridor, accompanied by two warders who carried a kind of stretcher, on which more than a hundred tin bowls were piled.

The warder who led the way, a tall old man, with a bent back and weak knees, who seemed with each step he took to trample wearily on his own life, opened a cell-door in silence. In silence one of the other warders handed the rusty tin bowl to Jürgen's young comrade, who silently poured the black brew it contained into the refuse-pail. He placed his slice of bread on a folding table.

"It's no good drinking that stuff." The sight of Jürgen had immediately excited him. "They call these slops supper. At midday there's stew and you have to eat it. And for breakfast this same brew of chicory with a piece of bread. That's all."

"Don't complain of the food to a visitor."

"You can hold out for a month or two, but some of them——"

"If you don't stop talking——"

"—have been here a long time already and have years more to serve."

"—the visitor must leave the cell at once."

"They—well, they just starve. They just starve to death. You can't imagine, comrade, what they look like."

"Silence!"

"You must write an article about it in our paper, comrade," he called after Jürgen, who was now giving the numbers of the cells in which his other two comrades were incarcerated. The warder was already making for the stairway. "Visiting time's over."

A green van, in which prisoners were brought from the police courts and remand prisons, had just come in. Ten condemned persons, men and women, were standing in the office, while the officials noted their names and other

particulars. The prisoners had to surrender everything they possessed; the men had even to unbutton their braces. Warders threw them the grey prison garb. Not a word was spoken.

The system works, thought Jürgen, and went towards the outer door. At that moment, an elderly man with a stubbly beard, rheumy eyes and a face covered with sores, shot out of the office; his head twitched watchfully to and fro, and his searching glance revealed in a flash his knowledge of the hell to which he had been condemned: he flew after Jürgen, determined not to neglect the remotest possibility of gaining his freedom. In a moment's time he would be in his cell, and all chance of escape behind him.

The warders laughed. One thrust him roughly back.

With his last glance, Jürgen caught the smile on the prisoner's face, a smile intended to convey to the warders that his vain attempt had not been intended seriously. And that twitching smile seemed to Jürgen the most terrible sight he had seen. The closing of the heavy door pushed him outward.

He stood blinded by the sunshine, walked on slowly. The dog padded at his side, its tail curled piteously between its legs. Jürgen lifted it up. "A man must take something in his arms." The trembling animal bored its head quickly and eagerly under his coat.

How many towns are there? And how many prisons in each town? How many cells in each prison? . . . And in each cell a human being. A hundred thousand wrecks of humanity! And in one cell back there, a man who knows that to-morrow morning—at five? at six? at a quarter past six? He doesn't know the minute, doesn't know it—his head will be chopped off! . . . Civilisation!

His impotence drained all the blood from Jürgen's veins,

and settled as a black pressure beneath his breast-bone. These devils ! . . . But who is to blame ? The prison-governor ? The judge ? The public prosecutor ? Or the prisoners themselves ?—They as little as the quarry-man who quarries the stone, or the bricklayer who builds the prison ; as little as the locksmith who cements iron bars outside the window of a cell, where men of his own class will spend their lives. No one is responsible. . . The state ? The state is a powerful instrument against the community of human beings. It is not a person. In the bourgeois state there is no one who is responsible. You grasp at the air. . . The system of things—that is to blame.

Another letter from his aunt was lying on the table. He pushed it aside unread. Even when Katharina returned—he had scrubbed the floor, sold a book and bought a few flowers with the money, and lighted a fire in the low, iron stove, for the evenings were now cool—the letter still lay unopened among his papers.

The dog recovered its high spirits. All the winter, Jürgen wrote articles for the Socialist newspaper, gave lectures on economics at the instructional course, and spoke at meetings. Just occasionally he attended the lectures at the university.

Thus he entered the twenty-sixth spring of his life, cut off from all that had gone before, no longer mentally bound to the experiences of his youth. At this time the nightmares which had formerly troubled him every night ceased to visit him. No longer did his father, the school-masters, his aunt, come to stare at him with all their power and arrogance, while he, an adult man, cowered trembling in a corner, powerless and at their mercy. Other dreams visited him, dreams such as he had never known before. Dreams of conflict, from which he emerged victorious and refreshed.

One night, instead of quaking with fear in his dream, he laughed in his father's face and brushed fearlessly aside the hand with the menacingly pointing finger. From that time his father's power was finally broken. When he awoke from that dream, Jürgen knew with complete certainty that he had overcome all the monsters that had haunted his childhood and youth. His father never again appeared to him in a dream.

Now it is not some alien will within me that decides my actions. But I had to live twenty-six years before I gained my freedom. . . . Now I'm toiling up another endless hill, but it is I, I myself, that toils up it. I myself have chosen, chosen freely, to take this path ; I am no longer coerced by an alien will within me.

To the hour of their death most people go on thinking thoughts and feeling emotions which are not their own to think and feel ; performing actions which are not theirs to perform : what thinks, feels and acts is the sum of all the outrages committed on their minds by the authorities, those despots of the soul.

Years afterwards, Jürgen remembered that morning when he felt for the first time the calm certitude that he was complete master of his own emotional life, no longer coerced by some agency foreign to his nature. At this turning-point in his life, he felt an unaccountably weightless feeling, as though his past lay no longer behind him but in front.

His head propped on his left hand, he sat sideways at the writing-table, his eyes on the communicating-door. He thought to himself : Henceforth I can never shake off responsibility by throwing the blame on the wounds I received in childhood and youth. The world may inflict fresh wounds upon me, but I can never make those old wounds responsible for the things I do or leave undone in

the future. I stand at the birth of my ego. All the greater the responsibility! How base a traitor a man would be if he sold his new-won self for the good things of life. One has only to remember that those hundred thousand prisoners occupy only a single tiny square of all the million squares on the chessboard of suffering.

Cries of children from the yard. Spring sunshine melting the last traces of soiled snow. From a leak in the spouting, heavy drops were falling with the regularity of a pendulum, gleaming past Jürgen's window and splashing in a puddle. The typewriter was clattering in the next room. Katharina was at work. She was always at work.

Like her, Jürgen had a feeling that, in a social order where scarcely any enjoyment could be won except at the cost of someone else, a Socialist could enrich his personal life only at the expense of his devotion to the idea.

But what is duty? I asked my aunt that question when first I left school. . . . We lie, together with those denied their rights, deep down at the point, at the lowest point, of a vast funnel. Above, the funnel is as wide as the earth, and there is life. We can rise only in company with those denied their rights, upward, towards the level where life is. The knowledge of this fact is everything. Woe to him that evades his duty; woe to him that leaves behind the multitude, whose rise is through suffering and conflict, who move by way of the long painful upward spirals in the millionfold step of the masses. . . . I know now what duty is.

When Jürgen looked back on that evening when, with head propped in his left hand, he thought over these matters, it seemed to him that only a week had passed.

Always he found the same faces in the instructional course, the same questions and objections. The meetings always followed the same course. A half-won strike. A strike that yielded a tiny increase in wages. Then a

defeat. Meanwhile, demonstrations. (The agitator and several comrades had been arrested.) Instructional course. Meetings. Struggles of a small or trivial sort. Disappointments. And again the instructional course. Meetings.

Each day like the rest, and all grey. Time flew by, so rapidly that it passed unfelt, and might have been standing still. Nothing happened of which, on looking back, he could have said that it brought refreshment to his spirit. It was as if one day only had passed, and that day, moving with wild speed, continually overtook itself and so consumed the past, the present, and the future.

Thus he stood in the uniform greyness of a day that was ever the same.

At first his love for Katharina caused wonderful hours to open in this grey monotony, great minutes, momentary glimpses of such deeps of happiness that the fulfilment of man's most ancient longing was granted him—the longing to overcome the loneliness that is the fate of all living creatures and divides each one from every other. But the memory of having glimpsed this intangible mystery of life, the knowledge that this withdrawal was allowed only to those whose union is deepened by common devotion to an idea: this memory, this knowledge had paled.

Jürgen was standing at his writing-desk. His hand put down a pencil, took it up again, put it down, took it up. For ever doing the same thing, the same, the same, never experiencing anything fresh—the flame begins to flicker out. . . . Years of self-sacrifice, living only on oneself! Is it humanly possible?

He should have been on his way, if he was to reach the editorial offices in time. "Thus we live, thus we live, we always live like this." . . . Where was that? Yes, they do live more or less like that. And we live like this. What a way of living!

The water was dripping again through the leak in the spouting. The slum children were playing noisily in the yard, where a grey hazel-bush was showing its brown-violet buds. Another year had gone.

Spiritual drought. Yes, yes, spiritual drought. He listened to the clatter of the typewriter. This girl, this child of her time, with the great, strong, mild heart, devoted all her life and all her energy to an idea!

The man was shaken through and through. "To give up life, to give up life, at one stroke, that is nothing. . . . Greatness is sitting there, beyond that door. Greatness in little duties! Tiny things, done loyally, daily, for years, in the service of an idea—that is greatness. Heroism is dead. The hero belongs to the past. Katharina sits there in lifelong imprisonment, like a condemned criminal. She has condemned herself. . . . Divide your devotion every year of your life, as she does, into three hundred and sixty-five days—and then raise your hand with quiet eyes when the call comes: Who has added to the number of the many, on whose proffered lives, I, humanity, passed forward to freedom? . . . I know that this, this is true greatness," he whispered with quivering lips.

Greyness all round him, he looked back at the greyness of years past; and then, with a searching, groping, imploring glance, at the greyness of the days to come. A few minutes later, without premeditation, he slipped out of the dilapidated brick hovel by the back-door.

He walked quickly, impelled by his longing for life. Towards the woods. Out over the rich ploughed land. Walked and breathed. Life rushed to meet him.

Birches—light green and smooth as butter—hemmed in the wood, whose million-budded branches were violet in the moist spring air.

The green hill, through which ran the tunnel, teemed

with brambles, blackthorn, stinging nettles, moss, young birches grown from wind-blown seeds, wild fruit trees and every kind of greenery—a giant's back, under a thick, wild growth of verdure, that sparkled and gleamed in the sun—and all dripping with moisture.

Jürgen stood at the end of the black tunnel and threw an exploring glance into it, as though he were looking back into his past. "This is where I came that morning when my aunt spat on me. I wonder if I wanted to be run over. I was fifteen then," he said, seized with sympathy for his own boyish self. "She spat in his face, in that boy's face. The bitch! . . . Well, those fears are no longer alive in me."

This was the fourth occasion during the spring that he had wandered away into the country. Each time he had come back full of fresh air, recreated, dirty and hungry. And Katharina had said: "You ought to do that oftener."

Once, some weeks before, they had come out together. The growth and verdure of spring, still imprisoned, had been no more than a promise in the vast expanse of beechwoods. Foaming streams, wet valleys, vaporous mists, with their odour of earth and smoke, had exhaled a chill in which the coming ardours were tangibly present.

Curious of what they might find, they had climbed obliquely up the steep bank of a lane, overhung with leafless bushes, and come to the main road which, smooth and straight, ran on into the far distance, to plunge at last, like a white arrow, into the mysterious horizon.

During his youth, the idea had persisted in Jürgen for years that he should go out of the town, on to the high road, leaving everything behind, his duties, his troubles, and just walking on and on, down the road.

Katharina was sitting on a milestone, Jürgen, near by,

on the stump of a tree. Warm bodies and cold cheeks, that prickled with heat.

As they ate their bread and sausage, Jürgen fell into that old longing of his. "Suppose we simply cleared out, now, on the spot, and went on without ever turning back, on and on, you and I, farther and farther out of it all!"

"Without a tooth-brush, without a nightdress, and without a passport," Katharina answered, smiling. "Without a destination! Just together!"

"Yes, you and I! Without money! Without a backward glance! It is not this and that, not the editorial work, the instructional course, the doctorate-examination; it is not passports that matter; it is the man himself. We, two human beings, could just go and leave it all, at last, at last! Breathe and feel and act and experience our humanity. Nothing else! . . . Tired, exhausted, we knock at a farmhouse and ask for a bed for the night.

" 'Who are you?'

" 'Human beings.'

"We come to a little town, bound fast in a rigid tradition of mine and thine, and we say: 'Humanity is here!'

"Great astonishment. People give us whatever we ask. For in their most secret hearts, all have been waiting for humanity, though they believed no longer in its coming.

"But there is no such thing as a true human being yet, Jürgen. It does not exist yet, cannot exist. The individual cannot achieve full humanity until it is possible for all to achieve it. . . . What terrible treachery we should be committing against the idea we serve!"

"How serious you are! As though I really wished to shake off everything, regardless of consequences, and wander on down this road, out into life. . . . Would you be very unhappy?"

Jürgen remembered her glance, strangely moved yet

light-hearted, and thought he heard her words again as she said

"Is it not true that the man who evades his duty to others in order to realise himself at all costs, who puts his own ego above everything else for the sake of gratification, must end by losing himself completely? Don't you think that a man's humanity will be submerged if he follows nothing but his own cravings and desires? Is it not true that a human being can only preserve himself and retain what measure of personality is still possible at the present day by doing his duty?"

Slowly he raised his head and looked away into the glamorous distance, as he had done that day with Katharina. But, as though drawn by some internal force, he turned round and stared into the black mouth of the tunnel. "That is duty. . . . If I had not already decided, I should have to, have to—I should have to decide again in favour of duty."

"Decide again! Decide again!" Defiantly he repeated the words in time to his footsteps. During the last few years Jürgen had grown so certain of his own thoughts and feelings, that even now he did not pause to examine them.

In front of him lay the uplands, softly undulating: ploughed fields, stretches of young seeds, brown and green, outspread far before his eye. From near by came the sound of women's laughter, followed by the deep-throated laughter of men. On the next hillside the sons and daughters of wealthy manufacturers from the town were enjoying a picnic. At the foot of the hill were six cars, among them the yellow car of Wagner, the banker.

Two white-clad girls came running down, hand in hand, under the impression that Jürgen was one of their fiancés who had promised to follow on foot.

Disappointment, smiles and, simultaneously, a sharp cry of pain. One girl had turned her ankle, and hobbled back supported by Jürgen and her friend.

I shouldn't care if I were in rags! The last pair of trousers belonging to his last suit had been cut down, a new seat had been made of the spare material, cut after the fashion of a pair of breeches.

Adolf Sinsheimer came up smiling, holding in his outstretched hand a leg of chicken for the man he was expecting. His mouth opened.

"It doesn't hurt now," said the girl reassuringly.

But the leg of chicken dropped from his outstretched hand. As he picked it up, he introduced to Jürgen the other girl, who hitherto had entirely ignored him. "This is Jürgen Kolbenreihner—my fiancée, Elisabeth Wagner." She looked up in sudden surprise and with unconcealed interest.

Jürgen had been entirely uninteresting to Elisabeth Wagner until she discovered that her former school-friend, Katharina, was in love with him. Since then she had thought of Jürgen as a particularly attractive and important man, for at school Katharina had had the reputation of being unapproachable and fastidious. Elisabeth had appealed, threatened, teased, made use of every means known to her superior mind, in order to persuade her fiancé to introduce her to Jürgen.

She began at once to talk of Katharina, who, though she was two years older, had been at school with her. And even when she cried out in admiration and astonishment at Katharina's fortitude in going to prison, Jürgen felt that the admiration was intended for him.

It was not till much later that he admitted to himself that his attempt to take immediate leave of them was meant merely to intensify Elisabeth's interest in him.

With a faint pout, which was alien to her cool nature, she begged him to join the rest of the party. "Adolf, you ask him!" She was holding Jürgen firmly by the hand.

"Oh, come along. . . . But if you really don't want to——" Adolf became aware that he had picked up the soiled leg of chicken and, with an angry glance at Elisabeth, threw it sideways into a field.

Conscious of a pleasant sense of power, Jürgen agreed to accompany them. The three sat down, a little apart from the rest, on a woollen rug.

"Roast chicken and red wine—what better meal could you have out of doors?" Elisabeth's girl-friend told the speaker who Jürgen was. At that, the group on the other rug became subdued.

These twenty-five well-nurtured, healthy men and girls belonged to the wealthiest families in the town. The men were almost all of Jürgen's generation, sons of manufacturers, working in their fathers' businesses or already managing businesses for themselves, as Adolf was doing for the button factory and button-export house.

"Capable fellows! Of course, you know the man over there: he's already made a name for himself as a scientist. Our year has nothing to be ashamed of. One's a member of the Reichstag. He was always one of the best scholars."

Elisabeth turned the conversation to literature, and praised a book that had recently appeared. Jürgen, half-starved, devoured his food in silence.

Adolf was in a quarrelsome mood and mentioned a number of books which he considered superior, but they were so bad that Elisabeth could not help laughing. She said to Jürgen, with a glance of understanding: "He knows nothing about it."

The six cars came slowly up the hill. Elisabeth told Jürgen that she had recently paid another visit to his aunt,

who was seriously ill. Adolf talked informatively about the economic condition of the country. "To tell the truth, this literature stuff is not in my line, and the things you go in for—agitating among workmen and making bombs, what?—are just plain idiocy. . . . Look at the position of our industry in the world markets, and have some sense! I'm not speaking as a half-grown boy; I have to carry on my own shoulders, for good or ill, the responsibility for six hundred employees. My friends here—look at them!—all capable men! One in banking, others in industry and science and politics, and all doing their duty to themselves and their country. . . . And Leo Seidel—do you remember the postman's son? The History of the World, eh?—for a time he was an impresario and God only knows what; now he's a banker in Berlin. On the board of a dozen big companies. Incredible, that man's career! In a few years' time he'll be able to upset the whole Stock Exchange by giving or withholding a signature. I shouldn't be surprised. . . . Really, you ought to take my advice and wake up."

Jürgen smiled the smile of one who is sure of himself and needs no such advice. He did not answer, but shook hands with them, refusing Elisabeth's invitation to drive back in the car, and with a formal bow to the rest of the party, walked away towards the wood.

What was it Adolf said at the end of that hymn to himself and our industry? No man can have power unless he achieves something. Life belongs only to the powerful.

That is true. But who are the powerful? And what qualities must they have in order to gain power? . . . There's a considerable number of persons who are born at the top, and manage to rise still further, because everything is made easy for them; a small number of men like Leo Seidel, who require not only intelligence, talent and

perfect health, but also an unusually large share of brutality, unscrupulousness and meanness, if they are to get through and above the world-wide plate of iron that rests upon the backs of the millions. Apart from these, there are a few Jürgens, a few men who could be on top, but voluntarily descend, and can climb the ladder again only by betraying the idea they hold dear. . . . And that's the whole system.

Inwardly grey, he stared after the six cars which, now far away, raced round the foot of a wooded hill, appeared again at the summit and vanished, a thin, black, crawling line, into the blue distance.

With a car, one could quickly get out of that lowest point of the funnel, where the proletariat struggle and die, and reach the top where life is. . . . Yes, I need only think one thought: "Every man for himself!" or, "Develop your personality!" and I should be at the top.

Full of disgust with everything, with life in general and his own life in particular, with the picnic party and the instructional course at which he had to lecture that evening, he reached the door of the house. My youth seems to be over. Youth! One goes on growing older, till one is old! He took a letter from the postman. The clumsy writing was unfamiliar: Phinchen begged him to come home. His aunt was very ill. Why had he not answered her last letter?

"I expect you're very hungry."

"No, not a bit! I've—I've not much appetite. . . . Here, read this letter."

"Don't you feel well? I mean, because you are not hungry."

"Yes, I'm quite well. . . . But what do you think I ought to do?"

“ Why shouldn’t you go and see her ? ”

All through his lecture at the instructional course, which occupied an hour and a half, Jürgen was plagued by the thought that he had concealed his meeting with the picnic party from Katharina. Not till early morning, after a night spent in restless dozing, did he fall asleep.

At twelve o’clock he was standing outside his aunt’s villa, after an absence of four years. His aunt was sitting, wrapped in blankets, in an arm-chair. Phinchen’s face, now happily smiling, had been wet with tears at her first sight of Jürgen.

The trouble was with her chest, as usual, said his aunt. She was wearing her usual kerchief of black silk lace, and looked quite unchanged. At her left ear the twelve black question-marks began, carefully curled with the tongs and pressed flat, as was her habit ; they ran across her temples and forehead and ended at her right ear.

Looking round the room, where the floor was as clean as the curtains, and shone as brightly as the polished furniture or the window-panes, where the table was spread so invitingly, Jürgen felt how poverty-stricken he must look in his last and only suit.

His aunt made no remarks, asked no questions, but took in everything. She was horrified at his appearance. His cuffs are frayed, his shirt and collar are dirty ! And those shoes ! The heels are worn down to the uppers. And suddenly, as though, while Jürgen was eating, she had been thinking of nothing else : “ I would—we should have a second storey built on. You could live at the top. The foundations of this house are excellent.”

“ Who would live at the top ? ”

“ If you got married.”

Jürgen shook his head. This was too much ! He went on with his meal without answering. He was sitting with

his back to his aunt, whose arm-chair was in the sunshine by the window.

"And when I die, you could have the living-room, dining-room and drawing-room on the ground floor, reception-rooms on the first floor, and bedrooms above. . . . Phinchen would be with you, too. . . . And the garden. Our beautiful garden!"

Phinchen tried to control herself, but burst into tears and ran from the room, taking the full dishes with her. It was very quiet. His aunt looked at Jürgen's back, looked through the window at the blooming magnolia tree, and looked at Jürgen's back again. "But I should have to know whom I was leaving my money to, my hard-won fortune. Painful as it might be for me——"

He put down the fork with which he had been about to stab a piece of meat, and looked slowly round. "You would have to disinherit me, what?"

"It would be a most painful thing to do."

"And do you think that I—— Do you really think that I could let myself be bribed like this?"

His aunt drew her hand across her eyes, and it came to rest by her chin. She looked away. And Jürgen turned back to the table. So I've not got as far as that, he thought. And, suddenly stricken to the heart: What was that? What was that? What?

"I only speak as my heart tells me." His aunt went on talking. He heard no more. What was that? . . . How far *have* I got then?

Out in the street, he thought: She always sits like that, when she has some scheme on hand. He did not know when or how he had left the villa. How did I get out? What was that? How far *have* I got? . . . First she draws her hand across her eyes, and then the tips of her fingers come to rest at her chin. That's her habitual

gesture. There she sits in her arm-chair, this tiny, yellow-faced woman, and makes plans : for to-morrow's lunch, for increasing her fortune, her hard-won fortune, by buying this or selling that security, or for the next washing-day, or for my future. If she had almond eyes she'd look exactly like an old Chinese.

Suddenly he stopped. That's all true. But it's beside the point. The important thing is to find out exactly what is wrong with me. . . . What do I want? The white, straight country road shot like an arrow into the mysterious horizon. That's nonsense. The desire to run away is nonsense. . . . But the feeling behind that desire is not nonsense. That feeling is—I, is the mind inside me, as it really is. . . . As it evidently is.

And then it happened that Jürgen's body moved independently towards a bench in the park, and sat down. And ~~now~~ : hands off everything! Relax every muscle! Suspend all thought and self-observation! Throw the will out of gear! Away with consciousness! The inner man, that alone, shall say what it wants, thought Jürgen. And he closed his eyes, his whole being relaxed, ready to take note of whatever came to him.

At first nothing came. Immediately before his eyes were little coloured points on a grey background. He sat at the centre of his life and there was nothing there. Sat so still, so lifeless, that a bird flew down, hopped twittering along the back of the bench and flew away again.

People, the expressions of faces, groups of people, a landscape by a river : images that had impressed themselves on Jürgen's mind long ago and whose significance was unrecognisable, rose up vague, paled and sank again. "This is irrelevant," he whispered several times.

Distant noises of the town, scarcely audible, punctuated by the hooting of cars : the life of the present, work

being done, loudly and softly. It was quite near the bench.

A gentleman in black half turned his head and shoulders and bowed, rather proudly, towards one side. Many men and women in evening dress were moving under the flashing lights of huge candelabra in a great hall. All bowed to the man in black. Their eyes followed him, respectful, jealous, appraising.

The old boy of the high school, who had already made a name for himself in science. . . . What about it ?

They neither ate nor drank ; they walked round with their eyes on the man in black, speaking of him, waiting. " No, there's no music."

Jürgen came in in a close-fitting evening suit, controlled strength in his chest and shoulders ; masterful, natural ; self-reliance in his face and speech. He spoke easily and courteously with those who approached him, ~~and~~ they quickly gave place to others, only to approach him inconspicuously again. None had a face of his own. Jürgen, sitting on a bench in the park, saw and felt none but himself, none but the Jürgen in the dress-suit, who, conscious of his own intelligence and strength, listened courteously and answered briefly but charmingly.

The other man in black shrank back, crept round unnoticed at the edge of the crowd. Jürgen was the centre. If people did not dare approach him, he approached them himself, spoke kindly to them, without arrogance or condescension. The man who has achieved something is not arrogant ; he has no need to be arrogant.

All were speaking of him. Every eye was on him. He was so much the centre of things that he attempted to be less so, to divert some of the interest to the other man in black. For which he earned a suppressed smile of admiration. His will, his mind, were active everywhere, deter-

mining the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of all those present.

Jürgen was no longer leaning in a corner of the bench, relaxed and with closed eyes. At the moment when the Jürgen in evening-dress entered the hall, he had sat up, had inserted himself and his feelings into the black-coated Jürgen. His face, shoulders and hands had mirrored the play of expression, had performed all the movements, of the other Jürgen.

He sat there with every muscle taut, leaning forward, staring at the green wooden fence, on which he had painted the picture of his wish. And when, suddenly, he saw nothing there but a green fence, he drew his hand across his eyes and it came to rest at his chin, following the very movement of his aunt.

So that is what I want. . . . What he wants—the man within me.

He leaned slowly back. But what was the nature of his achievement? What has he—what have I—I mean, what should I really like to achieve? . . . It doesn't matter what one achieves, so long as one achieves something, somewhere—it matters not how—and acquires power and influence.

An hour later, he was sitting, inactive, at the kitchen table. The article he had to write bored him. Always the same article, over and over again! His hand put down the pencil, and supported his head. The Jürgen in evening-dress entered the great hall. The image vanished again immediately.

For the clatter of a typewriter had suddenly broken out in the next room. Hatred against that clatter seeped into every heart-beat. The sunny yard was quite still. The slum children were playing in the woods. Steam was rising from the old, decaying garbage. The window was open.

Suddenly, as he sat there motionless, he heard a faint tinkle. He listened. Looked up. Heard it again. Illimitable anger took hold of him. With extreme caution, he put out his hand for the piece of flint that served him as a paper-weight, crept silently on tiptoe to the window and stood with hand raised, ready to throw.

The clatter of the typewriter stopped. Katharina came in. "Shall we—— What are you doing there?"

"Be quiet!" He shouted the words into her face, turned round, full of rage, and hurled the flint at the spot where he thought the rat was concealed. "Damn the beast! That unendurable tinkle!"

"But you always found it so pleasant, when you were writing at night, and now, all of a sudden——"

"Yes, now, all of a sudden! You see, now, all of a sudden!"

"I was just going to ask whether you wouldn't come out with me, as it's such a beautiful day. I thought a walk in the park—— But if you're—— You've never been like that with me! Then I'd rather go on typing."

She went towards the communicating door. He lurched forward, after her.

Later they were sitting, reconciled, in the public park, where, eleven years before, they had spoken for the first time, surrounded by scent and colour, flowers, playing children, blue sky and governesses, just as they were to-day.

"That generation has grown up since then, and inherited the privileges of their fathers," said Katharina. "And the burden still lies upon the others, as it did then."

"Yes, where are the triumphs of the workers? Nothing! Socialism is as far away as ever."

"That isn't what I meant," replied Katharina in a quiet voice.

A group of men and women galloped past down the

riding-track, which was separated from the park by a breast-high hedge of box. The two sat motionless and silent. Carriages were passing along the broad roadway, overtaken by occasional riders.

"We'd better crawl back into our hole," said Jürgen, whose mind was utterly divided.

The jet of water from the fountain, thick as a man's thigh, overtook itself continually. The long yellow car of Wagner, the banker, rolled past. Two women were leaning back on the upholstery, taking a leisurely ride through the scented air. A dark, gigantic fist squeezed Jürgen's heart as he recognised Elisabeth. She turned round and looked intently at the two figures. She had just been paying a visit to Jürgen's aunt.

"That is Elisabeth Wagner," said Katharina. "At school, Elisabeth was one of the cleverest girls we had. . . . Yesterday it was rumoured that Wagner's Bank was on the brink of ruin. I heard it from some comrades in Hommes's paper-mills. If the worse came to the worst, they would have to close down. Elisabeth's fiancé has broken off the engagement. He is at least consistent."

Bang! thought Jürgen.

"But did you see the other girl? She's very pretty. A school-friend of mine. Her parents' garden was at the end of ours. I could tell you a sad story about her. The saddest story I know."

"No, no, don't turn back!" begged Katharina's pretty school-friend, and laid her hand with a shy glance on Elisabeth's. But the chauffeur was already sweeping round in a curve. The car moved very slowly towards them.

"Do you know her then? Elisabeth nodded to you."

"Nodded to me?" said Jürgen. "Well, and what was the sad story about the other girl?"

As he spoke, Elisabeth's companion turned and sent a

look, heavy with feeling, at Katharina, as though she were looking back into her childhood.

Katharina said: "Until we were seventeen we were inseparable, and spent hours together every day. We promised each other that we would sacrifice ourselves to the uttermost, and never give ourselves to a man. We wanted to save the world. At all costs!"

"Many young people want to do that."

"Yes, and later on they laugh. . . . They would be right if they laughed at the methods by which they wanted to help and change the world; but they don't—they laugh at the fact that they ever wished to change it at all. They laugh not only at the content of their idealism, but at the fact that they ever were idealists."

And then Katharina murmured to herself, mysteriously moved: "In childhood many of us bear an ideal in our eyes, and later on we smile at our immature attempts to achieve it; yet perhaps the mere fact that we once tried to achieve that ideal counts for more than all the achievements of our later life."

"You make me shiver when you talk like that."

"This girl—you can't imagine what a gentle heart she had, how capable of suffering! And yet how does she live now? She is engaged to marry the Public Prosecutor."

"Is that the story? Is that all?"

"That's really the whole story." But Katharina went on to tell him that her friend's mother, a highly educated and wealthy woman, had set out to train her daughter to practise charity. The child had been trained to give to the poor.

"And so it happened once—and this is the story—that she was sent by her mother into the garden to give some cast-off clothes to an old woman. And when she stood face to face with the old woman, she burst into tears, filled

with shame and misery because she was the giver, and the old, white-haired woman the receiver. The bundle fell from her hand ; she ran crying into the house and, refusing to be comforted, sobbed until she made herself ill. . . . From that time she refused to take any part in these acts of charity. Think of it—she was six years old, and her heart knew everything ! . . . And now ? How terrible, how tragic life can be, when a mind like that can be infected, a heart like that hardened ! ”

A violent agitation, which he did his utmost to control, had seized upon Jürgen. For the sake of saying something, he asked : “ And don’t you speak to each other when you meet ? ”

“ How could we ? We live in different worlds.”

Live in different worlds, whispered Jürgen inwardly. In less than a second, the great hall with the black-coated Jürgen had risen before him and vanished again.

And suddenly Jürgen felt the top of his head rise up in horror. For he did not know whether it was himself, or some other person within him, that had thought, felt and said : How terrible ! Then he, too, is cut off finally from Katharina ! . . . Who thought that ? he asked himself. It wasn’t I who thought it.

“ At bottom, it is the story of all youthful idealists,” he heard Katharina say. “ You follow your lusts and desires against your heart’s better judgment, deceive your own mind, your ego, while striving for possessions, power, success, enjoyment, respect. You may achieve much or little, be choked in bourgeois disgrace or smothered in bourgeois honours, or perhaps in domestic comfort and a moderate position——”

That shall never happen to me.

“ —you may acquire motor-cars, liveried servants, a villa full of fine books, works of art which you not only

possess but can understand; you may obtain factories, fame, respect, the favour of women, a strong-box full of securities and power over thousands of men and women——”

That is what he wants, the man, the black-coated man, inside me.

“—but in any case you must lose—and that is the tragedy of our age—you must lose touch with reality, as it might be and as it is, you must lose your awareness, the goodness of your childhood’s heart and therewith your ego, your idealism; for in our time idealism can only find expression in the self-sacrificing struggle for Socialism.”

And my consciousness knows that, thought Jürgen. Suddenly he heard himself say: “I can’t think of any objection to that.”

At first Katharina was silent. Then she started back and looked at him in amazement: “Why should you try to think of any objection to it?”

For the second time Jürgen’s heart was filled with anger against Katharina. He made no reply.

They were well on their way home—the detached tenement house had already come in sight—when he said: “My aunt told me there was a good suit belonging to me in the wardrobe.”

“You ought to fetch it, if she’ll give it you. . . . When I left home I took practically nothing with me. But if I wanted to fetch my things now, they wouldn’t let me have them.”

“Oh no. She’s not like that. She might disinherit me, but apart from that——”

For a few days they hardly spoke to each other. In Katharina’s presence, Jürgen had a feeling that there was a layer of air beneath his feet. He avoided her as much as possible.

One evening, when he could bear the painful tension no longer, he said : " If a man hasn't achieved anything by the time he's thirty, he's not likely to do it later." He was standing by the writing-table, his back towards the window. Katharina was not far away. She made no answer.

" And so at last a man reaches forty. And what good is likely to come to him then ? The best part of his life is over. . . . Of course, if he absolutely believes in Socialism—if he simply believes . . . "

" What do you want to achieve, Jürgen ? "

" That's just it. I'm not a boy now. One goes on growing older and older. . . . And before you know where you are, life is gone. Isn't that true ? "

Katharina made no reply. She walked slowly towards the inner door, went out and locked it behind her. She stood in her own room. Put her hand to her heart. She knew everything.

Through the locked door Jürgen saw her standing there, saw her very attitude. He pressed his hand against his wildly beating heart. Turned jerkily towards the door. Wanted to rush after her.

He zigzagged to and fro between the inner and the outer door, like a fugitive surrounded by pursuers. And, with a terrible, inward death-cry, rushed from the house.

He ran out of the town, across country, over ploughed fields, till he reached the railway embankment, then on between the rails, as far as the dark mouth of the tunnel.

This time he neither stopped nor turned back. On ! On ! On ! urged his heart-beats ; drove him forward between the rails, forward into the darkness.

He stumbled. His hands grazed the ground. He was glad of the pain. He rushed on, struck his head against the wall, and stopped, panting for breath. Surrounded by

impenetrable darkness, he suddenly beheld his comrades, small and white. Katharina looked at him with contempt, pointed her finger at him.

On! On! cried his heart-beats. Far ahead in the distance, he saw a little red lamp. In two leaps he was past it. He stumbled, fell. And stayed there, crouching close to the little red lamp, that now hung far behind him in the darkness.

He raised his head, stared in front of him, saw the stony, snow-white faces of his comrades. Ducked his head between his shoulders, shut his eyes. Saw the snow-white group of comrades. Katharina turned from him, cold and indifferent.

How she despises me!

The rails in the tunnel began to whisper.

Jürgen sought anxiously for someone who did not despise him. And, in a moment, he was seated on a sunny hillside with a picnic-party, close to Adolf and Elisabeth. His aunt and his father came out from behind a bush and looked at him respectfully.

Suddenly Phinchen was standing before him in the tunnel, her face full of a great love.

Phinchen, am I a traitor? Yes or no? Who is right: Katharina or Jürgen? Don't be afraid to tell me the truth. I can bear anything.

You are right, dear Herr Jürgen. You are infinitely good. I know how you fought and suffered as a child and young man. Phinchen fell on her knees.

You mustn't kneel to me. Oh no; no one must kneel to me. And he was standing in the great hall, controlled power in glance and bearing, talking to his admirers without arrogance or condescension.

Katharina, snow-white, walked past him in the tunnel, making for the snow-white group of comrades. And as he

crouched there, his head sank down between his shoulders again, sank down on his breast.

The whisper of the rails had grown more audible. The air in the tunnel was gently quivering. Jürgen sobbed. Warm tears ran down his cheeks.

The rails sang louder and with a steely note. Suddenly the tunnel began to tremble so violently that drops of water fell from the roof. A drop splashed cold on Jürgen's hand.

He listened in sudden terror to the rapidly increasing noise ; sprang to his feet.

Then a thunderclap burst in the tunnel. The hill tottered. The shining rails became the red feelers of some gigantic beast ; the feelers grew longer and longer, shot roaring towards Jürgen.

He ran towards them, seeking the way out. A terrific, annihilating tumult filled the tunnel, roared round Jürgen, forcing him to stop.

" . . . Am I lost ? "

The locomotive hurtled towards him.

Jürgen felt his hair grow white ; he gave himself up and died. The train thundered irrevocably down its predestined path. At one stroke, the noise grew shrill.

For some time the rails went on singing. Grains of sand fell through the deafened stillness.

A man lay on his face in the tunnel. For him a third state, that was neither life nor death, had interposed between life and death.

Jürgen was fully conscious, but uncertain whether he still existed. His staring eyes saw nothing. If I scream, and don't hear myself scream, I am dead—this nightmare thought prevented him from screaming.

Suddenly, the blank, timeless, spaceless dark was rent by a wild, animal cry for life. Jürgen had caught sight of the one thing that belonged to the earth—the little red lamp.

Hurled upward by the flame of life, he turned round and round in a circle, striving to reach the end of the tunnel ; he began to scream and run, in greedy longing for the wild nut tree that grew just outside.

Galloped forward at mad speed, sweeping the darkness behind him, and emerged into a strange country. He had come out at the other end of the tunnel. Above him were the decaying ruins of a castle, an alcove that threatened to fall at any moment.

Jürgen looked back into the black opening behind him, automatically beating the coal-dust from his clothes. He ran his hands through his hair. It must have turned white. . . . Katharina will see by that how I have struggled and suffered. Let her see it !

He looked once more into the tunnel. " Escaped ! " he said. " Escaped ! " And turned away. Before him lay the world, near and far. Sunshine, blue sky, green fields, the river.

He was to go right through the village ; from there he would find a road leading straight to the town, said a peasant woman with a dried, wrinkled face, and went on her way, pushing a creaking hand-cart, which was piled high with fire-wood.

Jürgen knew the way. He had only asked for the sake of hearing a human voice. No one knows the value of life till he has escaped from death. . . . Oh, beginning ! Oh, life ! Oh, blade of grass ! Oh, joy of breathing !

So he strode on his way. Come what will—I'm alive ! As the tall block of brickwork came in sight, he thought : What will she say when she knows I've escaped from death ?

" You must be surprised at how I look. See my suit, the hole in my knee ! " And he began to tell his story.

But she had drunk the worst hour of her life to the dregs ; she had given up what she could no longer hold, and let it go.

"The train came hurtling towards me," he repeated. "I was in pitch darkness. Would it crush me?" He searched her face greedily for love and fright.

At that moment she was inwardly so grey and old that she was surprised at feeling anything, even contempt, for her lover. And now she struck back, with a face crushingly indifferent, and, at the same time, contemptuous: "What danger is there, if you flatten yourself against the wall?" That's all superfluous, she thought. Why did I say it? Why am I speaking at all? She felt her moaning heart.

"But don't you understand——?"

"I understand quite well, I understand you." Determined to accept the burden of the inevitable, she looked at him, and her eyes asked: What is to happen now? What do you want here?

"—— what an awful time I've been through?" He pointed to the hole in his trousers. And when she still remained silent, looking at him with her questioning eyes.

"It's time I went and fetched that suit. . . . We could meet in the town later on, go down to the office together and then home."

And when he was gone, she still wondered whether there was any possible means of keeping him, of making him hold out. Perhaps if I tell him with brutal clearness what is wrong?

She sat down at her work-table, looked unseeingly round the room, and found loneliness standing there, mighty as never before, inescapable. But he knows what he's doing; he cannot be trapped like a man whose mind is confused with fantastic, idealistic thoughts and aims, a man whose idealism breaks down as soon as it impinges on

hard reality. Jürgen knows reality, for he found the content of his idealism in the fight for Socialism.

"The bath is ready. I've put your underclothes on the chair, and your shoes underneath it," said Phinchen, beaming with happiness, to Jürgen. "Meanwhile, I'll press the suit. It's still quite good."

He kept on repeating: One grows old—and wants to achieve something. One wants to be respected—by those whose respect is a source of shame to the man who enjoys it. . . . Enjoys. Enjoys. One wants to enjoy life, to live. . . . These are the motives of other people, the motives for falling short, for betraying the idea, whether the traitors know what they are doing or not, whether they were Socialists or windy enthusiasts. Every man for himself—that, unacknowledged, is their philosophy.

As Jürgen was coming down the stairs and crossing to the living-room, bathed, wearing clean underclothes and a well-cut black suit, Katharina was still sitting motionless at the table. Jürgen knows all these things himself. He must decide; no one else can decide for him. . . . He has decided.

"Yes, I'm expecting visitors. Elisabeth Wagner and her friend. If I had known you were coming, I'd have put them off."

He was standing by the table, which was spread for afternoon coffee. I can go. . . . Elisabeth's friend will be the pretty girl who, as a child—he thought, and inquired of his aunt.

"Yes, she's very pretty. She's engaged to the Public Prosecutor. . . . He was a schoolfellow of yours, wasn't he?—Carl Lenz. . . . Is he older than you?"

"Two years. He was so stupid that he failed twice in the leaving examination. But what about him?"

"He's been appointed Public Prosecutor. A fortnight ago. Fancy that, at his age!"

That's what I was intended to be. Or was it a stipendiary magistrate? I've escaped that anyhow.

"So I thought Carl Lenz must have been a particularly brilliant boy."

"No, but a member of the smartest corps at the university." Now I'll go, he thought, as the door-bell rang. And asked: "Are you feeling better?" He glanced at the mirror, and saw a young man dressed neatly and carefully in black. "You might as well present me with the underclothes that are still upstairs," he said, with a mischievous smile.

We could have scraped the money together. If our life was too poor, too empty, we could have found better rooms, gone out sometimes, bought more books, lived a little better in every way. The engineer does it. And he's a good member of the Party. A limit above and a limit beneath—enough scope in the middle, without living so monotonously. The society of a few clever, sympathetic people. Even a little holiday now and then. Refreshment for the mind. Everyone needs it. None of those things would have presented any insurmountable difficulty. . . . But it isn't that. It isn't that. He's given up the struggle. He's adapting himself to life. . . . But why did he do this to me, to me? Why did he do this to me?

Her face drooped slowly down over her crossed arms. Her whole body was convulsed with sobs. She moaned, always in the same tone. Let herself sink down, given up completely to her pain.

After a while the dog came over to her, touched her with its paw. And when she made no movement, it lay down in the middle of the room, its head on its outstretched paws. Now and then, without raising its head, it turned its eyes on her.

"Suddenly the train came hurtling towards me. . . . Would it crush me? Which way could I jump? The place was pitch-black."

"Good heavens!" cried his aunt. And Elisabeth: "I should have died of fright!" She smiled and listened intently; her grey eyes seemed to see that iron monster crushing a human body. A pulse was beating beneath the delicate skin of her throat.

Jürgen suppressed his satisfaction and casually remarked that he had rather thought his hair had turned white.

"And yet he speaks as though he himself had not been concerned in it," said Elisabeth, and threw a glance of approval from Jürgen to his aunt. Jürgen's aunt sat up, put in its right place a coffee spoon that was already in its right place, and said flatly: "That girl's to blame for everything."

"But, auntie, don't talk of things you don't understand."

"But suppose you'd been killed?"

"Oh, come; I only needed to flatten myself against the wall, and I couldn't come to much harm. . . . Of course"—and he looked with a bright smile at Elisabeth—"at a moment like that, one doesn't think of the obvious thing."

"I know this much: all your troubles are due to that girl."

She's not without tact, thought Jürgen, as Elisabeth smiled at him with understanding, thus, as it were, taking Katharina's part. "You shouldn't say that. When all's said and done, Katharina is an unusual woman, and can't be measured by the usual standards."

"Auntie knows nothing of that," said Jürgen. With the same intonation as that Elisabeth had used, when she told him at the picnic that Adolf knew nothing of literature.

He was full of warm sympathy and respect for Katharina;

he took a wholesome pride in her, while she sat huddled at her table, sunk in pain and loneliness, and cried, and thought, over and over again, that one thought: Why, oh why, did he do this to me?

His aunt plucked up courage: "You can see now what this affair might bring—might have brought you to. To your death! . . . A wild, a disorderly girl—don't you agree with me?"

"You ought not to be so severe with Katharina. Really you can't judge her as you would some feather-brained girl of the middle class."

Jürgen wore the look of a man who hears people talking nonsense without troubling to contradict them. Elisabeth doesn't seem very feather-brained herself, he thought.

"You'll have—you'd have—you would have had nothing but trouble, everlasting trouble."

"She's pretty obstinate," said Jürgen, with a hearty laugh, when his aunt had left the room to get ready for church. "She doesn't give up very easily. Now she thinks she's won, and yet she never can win in this matter. Never!"

Elisabeth looked at him, openly accepting his challenge. After a long skirmish of words and looks, Jürgen was able to ask, finally: "And what of Adolf?"

"He's too stupid for me. Simply too stupid!" she said, her face shining with honest conviction. And she asked if Jürgen would accompany her: she had some shopping to do.

Katharina was walking down the main shopping street, in her hand a loaf of bread, wrapped in paper, which she intended to eat at the newspaper office that evening. The shock stabbed her through and through. So she stood, hidden by the crowd of purchasers and shop-gazers that moved slowly, like a long, variegated, many-footed animal,

along the shop-fronts, and saw Elisabeth put her hand on Jürgen's shoulder and lead him to the window of a toy-shop.

By their attitude, as they stood there side by side, Katharina knew that she had a rival. She touched her lips thoughtfully with the tip of her tongue, and went on her way.

As she went, she saw the two of them standing by the shop window, saw Elisabeth's delicate white hand on Jürgen's back, and imagined the finger of her other hand, pointing. What can she have been showing him? A doll? A rocking-horse?

All the way down the street, Katharina was absorbed in the question of what Elisabeth had been showing to Jürgen. She pictured the objects in a toy-shop window. Not till her inner eye suddenly caught sight of the face of her lover, did she confront the real problem. A piercing pain forced her to stand still, her hand on her heart. And now? What now? Shall I—shall I fight for him?

But the knowledge that Jürgen had fled, not from her, but from himself and his self-appointed sacrifice; the knowledge that whatever victory she won in her struggle for Jürgen could only be won at the expense of her devotion to the cause—this knowledge thrust Katharina back into grey hopelessness.

None the less, she was waiting at the street corner at the appointed time, tormented by the thought that, despite the utter impoverishment of her own life, it was still she who was called upon to be the giver. For her woman's instinct told her that Elisabeth found Jürgen interesting and desirable only because of his intimacy with the Katharina who was considered remarkable and unapproachable. If she becomes his wife he will owe it to me. How terrible! Katharina froze at the very thought.

Neatly dressed, refreshed by his bath, the clean underclothes and the companionship of Elisabeth, he walked towards their rendezvous, controlled strength in his bearing, full of the joy of life. He saw Katharina waiting for him, and in an instant became aware of the impassable gulf that his present feelings had torn open between them. He stopped, standing on the brink of this gulf, knowing that it could only be bridged if these new feelings of his were annihilated; knowing, too, that they could never be annihilated. He groped his way out over the edge of the gulf, stood on thin air, walked on it. Into his bearing came a wild, unreasoning eagerness to reach her, and into his face a counterfeit joy at meeting her, mixed with shame.

But she stood there, a woman, grey, understanding and aware, and took her fate upon herself. Thus she looked at him.

"How they live, these bourgeois! They know, they know very well what they want. . . . You've no conception of the way my aunt talks. . . . She thinks everything's so simple."

"Your aunt wants you to be happy, she wants you to marry Elisabeth Wagner." She listened to the false heartiness of his laughter, and felt: How far, how far away he is already!

"You've guessed quite right. That's just what she wants. . . . Such nonsense! . . . But I've had quite an amusing time with her. She's no fool, you know, and not a bit bourgeois when you know her. . . . A charming creature!"

"Yes, Jürgen; she's a sensible girl, a lovable girl."

"Do you know her well enough to say that she's lovable?"

"Why shouldn't she be a lovable girl, Jürgen; why shouldn't she be lovable?" asked Katharina, in her heavy

sorrow, and thought : How heavy the words are—they fall like lead !

“ She even took your part and defended you.”

How can he insult me so ? The houses bent forward ; the street revolved round her. She had to hold fast to Jürgen lest she should sink into the black mist before her eyes.

“ You’re working too hard ; you must take care of yourself, take better care of yourself.”

There was no anger, no contempt left in her glance, but it tore away every mask, every trace of self-deception, and met his eyes in a manner that forced him to see the facts.

His voice was harsh : “ You must decide ! ” Let me live or shoot me down, but you must decide, cried his heart, utterly at her mercy. His eyes stared wildly.

She did not answer ; did not even move her head. Nothing about her moved. Nothing moved within her. Her eyes saw nothing.

And Jürgen knew that no one in the world could decide but he ; confessed to himself, for the first time, that he had already decided. “ Go, Katharina, go ! Go home now, Katharina.” His voice was drowned in inward tears. “ Sleep well.”

“ You sleep well, too.”

That was their leave-taking.

Her life opened right back into the early days of childhood. She saw the long chain of suffering and devotion. Saw what was still permitted and destined for her in the future. She took her life to her breast.

“ You, too—you sleep well, too.” Jürgen whispered the words over and over to himself. Something compelled him to step always in the middle of the slabs of concrete of which the pavement was made. He had to take three little steps to avoid treading on a crack. “ You sleep well,

too." And one long step to cross a larger slab. "Sleep well, too."

He half-crossed the street, and hurried on between the tram-lines. A tram came swinging towards him. "Decide! Decide!" He screamed, and found himself compelled to count ten before he could leave the tram-lines. "... Two . . . five . . . eight, nine, ten. . . ."

"Now to fifteen!" he cried. Counted: "... twelve, thirteen, fourteen . . ."

And awoke two days later in his aunt's bedroom, his head and legs thickly bandaged. Elisabeth was sitting at his side.

CHAPTER VI

THERE were scentless flowers in the sick-room. Phinchen went about on tiptoe with happiness, even when she was in the cellar or the attics. The nursing must be better than in the best nursing-home—this commandment was written on invisible tablets. No one spoke above a whisper. When his aunt had to give an order, she stole on tiptoe to Phinchen, whose mouth opened as she listened. Jürgen was absolute lord, and, at the same time, a baby, watched over day and night.

Spring was at work in the garden. On warm days Jürgen lay dreaming and dozing for hours in an invalid chair on the sunny balcony ; and he watched life faintly quivering in the plants in the garden, watched the tiny leaves unfold towards the sun.

It was half a thought and half a feeling. My life is rising again from its foundations. A second childhood ! My life is unfolding, very softly, very mildly.

As he dozed, he dreamed he was crossing bridges, always bridges, more and more bridges. In this place, he thought, there's nothing but bridges. Nothing but bridges !

There was no sharpness in his weakened body. He was untouched by desire. All his conflicts and sufferings lay far behind him. Katharina was a pale figure in the blue distance.

His moods of soft contentment, his beneficent sense of convalescence, his unquestioned power over his aunt, who treated him like a wounded soldier returned from a

thousand perils, all received their ground-tone from the feeling that his rest was well earned. Everything fitted smoothly together.

"I took leave of Katharina," said Jürgen, who found no difficulty in remembering—he was walking, now whole and free from bandages, arm in arm with Elisabeth, towards the white coffee-table under the nut tree—"I took leave of Katharina as usual. 'Good-night, Katharina. Sleep well.' The sort of thing one does say, you know. 'You sleep well, too,' she said. Then I went on down the street, absorbed in one thought, a crucial thought—what I call a central thought—the kind of thought that enables us to see and understand life from a completely new angle."

When Jürgen was being carried into the house, his aunt had said to Phinchen: "This accident is due to that awful girl with her mad ideas." But now the anxiety and shyness, with which she regarded her returned nephew, prevented even the memory of those words from reaching her consciousness.

She was prepared, if necessary, not to complete her sentence, as she said cautiously: "These deep subjects may not be quite suitable for a convalescent."

"Auntie's got a baby to nurse. She wants to feed it with a bottle," laughed Jürgen, who did not wish to be pitied or treated as a child in Elisabeth's presence.

"You've been through such trouble, Jürgen."

A spark of anger showed in his look and reduced his aunt to immediate silence. She went on silently crocheting an antimacassar and spinning her plans. Her banker had laughingly reassured her regarding the state of Wagner's Bank: the rumour had been nothing more than a manœuvre on the part of a competitor.

It's true the Wagner family is of quite recent foundation, thought Jürgen's aunt. The banker's father was a house-

agent, while the history of the Kolbenreiher family can be traced back to the beginning of the fifteenth century. But even the most recent families grow old with time. While she thought, she listened to Jürgen's voice. He too had a feeling that he had rarely spoken with such ease and effectiveness.

Her whole body seemed full of tranquillity, as she looked after Jürgen and Elisabeth. No one could tell by the look of the girl that her grandfather had been a miserly little house-agent.

"And now show me the room you had as a boy."

"But it's hidden away, up under the roof. No one will dream of looking for us there."

She gave him back his conqueror's glance.

"I haven't been here myself for four years," said Jürgen, as he studied the oval photographs of the Kolbenreiher family which hung, arranged in a great oval, above the small sofa.

From the window they could see the nut tree and the coffee-table, where his aunt, a tiny black speck, was sitting at her crochet work.

He looked at Elisabeth without speaking; went to the door and locked it.

She was wearing a pale blue silk frock, and was standing with her back to the window, her hands grasping the sill. A pulse was beating under the delicate white skin of her throat. Her hair was fair, of a lighter shade where it was exposed to air and sun, and of a yellowish green beneath, like unripe corn.

A scarcely perceptible pink flush coloured her whole face, and she fixed her dazzlingly clear eyes on Jürgen, telling him wordlessly, with a faint, cool shrug of her shoulder, that it only happened because she shared his wish.

And when she stood at the window again, her hands grasping the sill just as before, she asked him : " Do you still love Katharina ? " And he thought : It was wonderful of her not to ask that question before. " Nonsense ! Katharina lives, so to speak, in another world. . . . But we must go down now, or my aunt will notice our absence."

" What if she does ? " said Elisabeth, frankly unimpressed by this possibility. She seemed to have learned the ways of the world without the expenditure of much effort, to have been born with a brain that worked without friction. She had never known the questionings, doubts, struggles of heart and conscience ; she freely confessed to herself and others, with no illusions on the subject, that her sole interest was herself, her life and her enjoyments.

" You're splendid. If we hold together, there's nothing and no one can stop us." Rising to their full height, they moved towards each other, and stood, body pressed on body, mouth on mouth—

While Katharina lay on the bed, fully dressed, curled up like a sick animal. The shutter was closed at the window ; the room was dark as night. Only a thin, piercing ray of sunshine fell on the floor, and on this the dog was lying. Her emotional centres, torn open and exposed, quivered at the slightest touch, quivered at every thought of Jürgen : every time her eyes fell on some object that had belonged to him—the stone he had used as a paper-weight, a pair of worn-out shoes that still lay in the corner.

Her instinct told her that her mind could only avoid injury, if she gave herself up unreservedly to her grief. Therefore she allowed no one to visit her, accepted no comfort of any sort. She refused to deaden herself and her pain with the activities of life, with work. She lay

day and night on the bed, burrowed deep in her sorrow, fighting for health, for life.

Jürgen was the first and only person to whom she had given all her trust, with whom she had been able to bar the door to loneliness.

One day, when three weeks had been spent in this struggle, she realised that she was with child ; and for the first time she stroked the head of her devoted companion. The dog began at once to bark, as a protest against the past weeks of ill-usage ; but when Katharina took no further notice of him, he lay down, his nose on his forepaws, and his reproachful growls faded away.

For a few weeks more—by this time the shutters were open again at her window and she was back at work—Katharina hoped that Jürgen would find that the victories to be won in the other camp were dishonouring and valueless, and would return to the duty to which he was fated by his own understanding of life.

As the months and days passed, full of the same loyal endurance and effort, she found her way to a new beginning. It even happened that there came into her eyes a smile of profound pleasure, when she came to a workers' meeting, and felt the evident sympathy of her comrades.

While still confined to his bed, Jürgen had agreed with his aunt that the first and most important thing to be done was to prepare himself for the doctorate examination.

At Christmas, the two of them were married in church. Jürgen had finally given way to his aunt's entreaties with the words : " In the devil's name, then ! " And Elisabeth allowed her father to buy her consent to a church ceremony with a diamond pendant.

Lines of laurel trees formed a path from the bridal carriage to the altar, where the bride and bridegroom knelt

in a great semicircle, formed by the relatives and friends of both families.

"Damned farce!" whispered the kneeling bridegroom facetiously, and Elisabeth squeezed his arm in acquiescence and bent her head to hide a smile. It looked as though she were listening, deeply moved, to the words of the priest.

During the ceremony a mixed choir sang to the tones of the organ: "Hear, O Heaven, hear our prayer; Let love reside with this blessed pair."

Almost all the members of the picnic-party who had partaken of red wine and roast chicken on the hill, with the addition of two university professors, the young scientist, an editor and several artists who were in Elisabeth's set, were present at the wedding feast. The table, in the form of a horse-shoe, occupied the whole width of the Wagner's drawing-room, and was decorated with twelve huge horse-shoe nails, composed of hot-house violets. This idea originated with Jürgen's mother-in-law.

The newly married couple sat facing the semicircle, exactly in the middle of the horse-shoe, so that their legs formed the centremost clamp with which a horse strikes fire from the flinty roads.

If art, science or the press, seated round the left-hand clamp, made a joke about the bride and bridegroom, it was passed on, with many winks, till it reached the right-hand clamp, where it gashed a conversation concerning the possible rise and fall of shares, though the gash closed again in the course of a few seconds.

"When it comes to banking, my philosophy is this: the labourer is worthy of his hire," repeated Jürgen's father-in-law, who never spoke without holding up his forefinger.

At the wish of Jürgen's mother-in-law, a string quartette played Schumann's "Traümerei" for the second time.

The servants wore white gloves as they waited at table. The horse-shoe steamed. One man ate next to nothing; he was the wealthiest person present, the owner of mines and mills; he suffered with his liver, was as yellow as the yoke of an egg, drank table waters, and had not yet spoken a word. His beautiful, much-coveted daughter, who was just growing up, placed carefully selected scraps, cut up very small, on his plate.

Opposite these two sat the fat, shapeless paper-manufacturer, Herr Hommes. He always looked as though he were on the point of sneezing, and was now listening attentively to a rubber manufacturer, who was proving that, as a result of an embarrassing rise in the price of raw materials, it was impossible to do a satisfactory bit of business. He explained the reason for this. One had to keep on twisting, he said, keep on twisting.

Herr Hommes slowly grasped a button on the rubber manufacturer's waistcoat, as though he were going to cling to it, lest in sneezing he should fall from his chair. He said: "If a man is to do anything really big, he must be a bit of a fool."

From the stockbrokers' corner rose the phrase, "Montan shares"; and it bobbed up and down like a silver ball dancing on a jet of water, till the wealthy sufferer with his liver turned off the tap: "There might be a sharp reaction any day in Flitz Motors."

"Smart reaction," murmured Jürgen. Something was taking place around him that seemed to be life. "The whole thing is unbearably nauseating. We won't stay here much longer," he whispered; "I shan't stay for the end."

The remark of the rich man with liver-complaint was investigated by the stockbrokers for traps and ulterior motives. Jürgen caught: "Hoist with his own petard." And then: "Look before you leap, that's the thing."

"I'll tell you what it is," cried his father-in-law. "What you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts. That's how it is with these securities."

A farmer, who had difficulty in maintaining the rôle of a man of the world on account of his youthful appearance, assured Jürgen that pig-breeding was the only way, absolutely the only way, of making money. On the whole, things were not too bad with him. He hadn't been through the agricultural college for nothing. He was bringing method into farming. "But you know there's still something lacking. I don't quite know what it is, myself. One feels unsatisfied. The mind, you know—the mind, so to speak—doesn't get its proper share."

The rubber manufacturer attempted in vain to lure the man with liver-complaint into expanding on the question of Flitz Motors. And the stockbrokers were still interpreting and investigating, and telling each other there was nothing like making doubly sure.

"I'll tell you what it is!"

"The working-classes don't want freedom; all they want is bread. They want to eat their fill and get drunk, believe me," said Herr Hommes, speaking into Jürgen's face, which was white with anger.

Jürgen said nothing. This fat swine, he thought, whose life consists of eating, drinking and whoring, could never come to a right conclusion, even if he had to change his mind.

Herr Hommes clung to the table, threw back his head with open mouth, jerked it forward, and, instead of sneezing, said: "You, oh, you'll very soon come round to my way of thinking."

Jürgen grasped Elisabeth's wrist in an effort to suppress his rage, while her whole body quivered with repressed laughter. Then she said, helpfully: "If you like, we'll slip quietly away."

But just then Herr Wagner rose to his feet. He began his speech by bowing to the place where Jürgen's aunt had originally been seated, though she had long since gone home, having been suddenly taken ill again.

He was conscious, he said, of the high honour done to his family by the marriage of his daughter to the last scion of the old and aristocratic family of Kolbenreih. His daughter had married, so to speak, into the family of Kolbenreih, which had supplied the town with a mayor as early as the fifteenth century. His own family, on the other hand, was still young, but had its future before it. Like a good, recent issue of stock!

"Young and old are wedded together." And from such a union came just what the Fatherland needed. "Solidity combined with young and vigorous enterprise. . . . The fusion is complete." Success was bound to follow.

"And what of marriage? . . . Marriage is like a speculation on the Stock Exchange. Light and shadow! Sunshine and clouds! The shares rise and fall. That's life. The important thing," cried Herr Wagner in a loud voice—he had already drunk a little too much—"is to hold on together in love and loyalty, even when a slump clouds the marriage sky. . . . The recovery will come sooner or later." Yes, it was specially important to learn a profitable lesson from the slump.

He had become so entangled in his metaphor that even his final toast to the married couple applied equally to speculation on the Stock Exchange. All rose from their seats.

Jürgen's face was as white as a sheet. Rather a broken back than a bent one, he thought, determined not to reply to his father-in-law's remarks. He was the first to sit down, and he drew Elisabeth down firmly beside him, so the others also resumed their seats. The servants handed round black coffee, liqueurs and big cigars.

Suddenly Jürgen was shaking hands with a crowd of people, without knowing who they were. "Good-bye." His body moved round automatically from one to another, and finally came to Elisabeth. He shook her hand. "Good-bye."

Everyone began to laugh. Even Elisabeth was taken aback by her husband's action. For in his haste and confusion he had ended by bidding his wife Good-bye on the eve of their honeymoon.

The couple remained a moment longer in the doorway. A round face, with a round, clipped beard, twinkling, gold-spectacled eyes and pursed-up lips, approached Jürgen's ear and whispered : " Hope you enjoy yourself ! " With arms outstretched to preserve his balance, the round-faced man stole back on tiptoe to the horse-shoe.

First they went southward, where in winter it is still spring.

A few days later Katharina was delivered of a boy.

They spent ten weeks in Paris and Rome, and at the end of that time came to a southern seaport which lay yellow in the sunshine, full of orange booths, bazaars and colonnades, traversed by sailors, Chinamen, negroes, well-dressed foreigners and weary emigrants, noisy with twenty different languages and the scream of sirens. The air was full of the tang of salt and tar, and a tangle of masts rose up from the ocean giants and stood stark against the sky. The town lay there like a boy's dream, arisen in solid form from the infinite sea ; the dream of a boy who longs to escape from parents and teachers, from all the troubles of youth, all bonds and vocations, out into the untrammelled splendours of life.

They drove in a cab, under a gigantic sunshade with red and white stripes, towards the hotel. As they went they passed a long, continually growing procession of working

men and women, coming from a tobacco factory. Their blouses and shawls were brightly coloured, their faces flaccid and pale.

Jürgen looked away. But when they were in their room, he could not suppress the sudden thought that some Herr Hommes owned the factory.

"In fifty-six hours we could be in Africa." He received no answer. Elisabeth had fallen asleep on the sofa.

The life of the world pours through her in an infinitely broad stream, never varying; she enjoys it every moment, without looking back or forward, without scruple or hesitation.

Elisabeth was breathing calmly and deeply; she was young, healthy and beautiful. The sunlight, broken up by the drawn Venetian blind, drew a shining, striped pattern across the morning frock of the sleeping girl. It was warm. A siren screamed far away. The scent of the mimosas was strong.

How she breathes! . . . Good, let us go to Africa! To New York! To India! Wire for money! For the present, we won't go back at all. What's going to happen will happen. Elisabeth would say "Yes" to anything, without reflection. A splendid, wonderful animal, simply organised, that lives, just lives. Unreflecting, smooth and cool as a fish. Cool, through and through! ". . . In the night, in the night, when love's flame burneth bright." Jürgen hummed the song. It is only at night-time that she's hot. Then she knows no limits. . . . She's an outpost of the life-force.

*"There were two lovers, so 'tis said,
Spent all one night together in bed.
I wonder what they did?"*

Jürgen saw a man standing in the lounge of a Paris hotel. He rushed up to Elisabeth, sat beside her, floating always

in a cloud of eagerness and desire, in theatres, restaurants, boulevard cafés, cabarets. He went into Elisabeth's bedroom.

The Jürgen sitting there in the arm-chair was suddenly seized with nausea at the thought of the Jürgen who had whirled through Paris and Rome, caring for nothing but himself and his pleasures, who had entered Elisabeth's bedroom in his sleeping-suit, and arrived that day so light-heartedly at the seaport town.

"He's doping himself. . . . Disgusting ! . . . Where will he end ? What will become of him if he goes on like this ? . . . That is not I. That is someone else," he whispered, sitting there in the chair. "Strange. Strange."

Jürgen turned his eyes in another direction, looked out of the window at the glittering sea, trying to lose sight of the other Jürgen. He, too, is an outpost. It's Nature, the animal, the life-force, that drives him, that drives—me. Nature that drives the sexes into each other's arms for procreation, the preservation of the species ; she is ready to bring us to any villainy to gain her ends.

Elisabeth moved : as she slept, her hand found its way through her dress to her partially bared breast.

And it succeeds, this life-force. For, as a final prize, it gives this unique feeling. Gives it to animals and human beings, women and men, bitches and dogs, Elisabeth and me. Let the others, the rest of the world, perish ; it does not care. The real man and woman have not yet come. It cannot wait for them. That's the whole explanation. A scientifically adequate explanation !

A bell summoned them to luncheon. He crossed the carpet on tiptoe, and gently touched Elisabeth's shoulder. She woke without a start, opened her eyes, so simply, so clearly. She has no depths in her. She is as she is. Asleep, awaking, or awake.

But this is stranger still. How extraordinary! This is abnormal, thought Jürgen, as he sat at table; for he was watching the Jürgen sitting at table, watching him laugh and amuse himself, watching him closely, intently.

So we are two. I am looking at myself. Myself! . . . But that isn't I at all. I'm looking at—him. Am I, the looker-on, I? Or is he I?

"Good, let's do it!" Elisabeth wanted to climb a hill that evening, and watch the sun set over the sea.

I can't stand this for long, of course. We must combine, unite. If we can't unite, then one of us must give way—the other or I!

You stand at the birth of your ego.

Who thought that? Jürgen asked himself with a shudder, and poured wine into his glass. "Can I give you some wine?" It wasn't I who thought it. Was it the other? Or a third?

His spine froze. Greedily he emptied two glasses of wine, one after the other.

Evidently I am in a state of transition. At a stage of development. I'm developing. They say one does sometimes, even at my age. I must try to get into a satisfactory relation with myself. After all, I must live with myself. His whole face was flushed.

After sunset, they were sitting on the terrace of a restaurant, overlooking the harbour. Two men were lugging a dripping basket of woven bast, full of oysters, between the rows of tables on their way to the kitchen. Pedlars were offering combs, embroidery, carved ivory. The sky, the air, the sea, the life of the harbour and of the streets, flooded through the smart restaurant. All boundaries were broken down. Music was playing. On the wall of the house opposite the images of a film succeeded each other, watched by a dense crowd of people.

They ate oysters, which cost little more than bread. Drank a bottle of champagne. A plump little girl of eight came over to the table and began to dance. She had castanets in her hands and narrow paper ribbons—blue, red and green—in her hair and on her frock, which exposed her plump, naked little thighs. As she danced, she sang a song of the brothels, lifted her frock in front, lifted it behind, spread out her legs in time to the dance, and made an obscene gesture.

An outpost of the life-force in another quarter, thought Jürgen. It doesn't mind what means it uses so long as it gains its ends. He felt a stiffness in his joints that was not unpleasant. Elisabeth gently stroked the little girl's head.

An hour later, she was seated, undressed, before her combs and brushes. Her back was turned to Jürgen. Her hair hung loose and shone with a yellow light. She nodded to him in the glass, and gave to her shoulder the kiss that was intended for him.

My wife's a beautiful woman. He stretched. One mustn't let these reflections on development and existence intrude too much. Life develops of itself.

The harbour was asleep. The sea was singing its great, peaceful, monotonous song. The scent of the mimosas was stronger in the warmth of the night. Far away a girl was singing in the darkness.

A street of factories, grey with mist and yet distressingly clear. Figures, singly, in groups, in endless processions, walking through the dawn towards a destination prescribed and unchangeable—the gigantic, grey gate of a factory. Fresh millions came marching up, grey, silent as ghosts, and vanished into the world's factory gate.

And you stand at the birth of your ego.

Jürgen was breathing heavily. Elisabeth turned towards him. The skin of his face was tense and quivering, as

though, like the envelope of a balloon, it had to withstand a tremendous atmospheric pressure. A human being asleep.

Elisabeth touched the groaning man. He sat up like one awakened from death. For one eternal second his face showed that he was prepared for the uttermost.

"Your face wasn't like a face at all. It was like a prison, like a fist." She slipped under the coverlet to him. "What were you dreaming of?"

"I don't know." He did not know. "How sweetly you smell!" He snatched life wildly to him, now that he had arisen again out of the depths of his own being.

It was many months after their return—before him a dead, empty loneliness was opening, that neither amusements nor work could fill—when one day Jürgen was reminded of Katharina. He was at a large party and Adolf Sinsheimer drew him aside into an alcove. "Have you ever been there since? . . . What? To the Oriental Salon, of course. They've got four girls there now! All rubbed with salves. One of them is the absolute spit of Katharina Lenz. Amazing! . . . She's had a child."

"Who's had a child?"

"Katharina. A son. The family pretends it's no concern of theirs. They say Frau Lenz died of grief. . . . When shall we go round to the Salon?"

For one endless second Jürgen had a feeling that a cold lightning-flash was circling round with thousandfold speed inside his head, bursting his temples. The whole structure of his new life lay in fragments. Jürgen rose out of the ruins, went down the stairs and walked through the town, driven forward by something that marched behind him, keeping step.

The streets grew narrower and darker, the houses smaller. Stretches of unbuilt land, a rotting wooden

fence. The little window hanging near the ground, shining red in the darkness.

The night was warm. The window open. He heard voices, the voices of several men, and Katharina's answer. He watched her as she went, carrying a white plate in her hand, from the gas-cooker to the laundry-basket, where their son was lying.

Jürgen thought he recognised the agitator in a man who put out his hand and said something to the metal-worker. He heard Katharina laugh. It sounded mysteriously mild in the summer night.

The typewriter began to clatter. The agitator was dictating.

That is a separate world, complete in itself. . . . What an immense inner change would have to take place in me, before I could enter it. . . . That door is not quite shut.

Three workers came out through the door, but Jürgen had vanished.

Some days passed before he succeeded in calming himself; then he decided that Katharina was probably better off than he. She doesn't have all these vexations that I have. Doesn't have to waste her time with these rotters. She has her comrades and lives for her idea. About that time he formed a plan to write a great work with the title : *Economics and the Individual Soul*.

Jürgen had worked all the morning in his comfortably heated office. When he stepped out into the piercing cold and piercing brightness of the winter's day, his eyes began to water, distorting the forms of a lamp-post and the figure of a passer-by, so that he saw them double and treble.

At that moment the idea occurred to him for the first time that he himself and everyone else consisted of several persons, all actually present within the one body. He

thought that these multiple individuals, like the threefold pedestrian he had just seen with his watery eyes, were packed into and behind each other in everyone's body, thinking, perceiving, feeling and quarrelling with each other.

As he walked to the stopping-place of the tram, he looked back over the twenty months of his new life, with its new activities. Whenever Jürgen, the partner in Wagner and Kolbenreihers Bank, received instructions to buy or sell certain shares on the Stock Exchange, which was part of his duty to the interests of the bank and its customers, another clear-headed Jürgen remarked: It is an unquestionable fact that these gains are a part of the surplus value squeezed out of the proletariat for the benefit of Herr Hummel and the firm of Wagner and Kolbenreihers.

That is, for my benefit too. So I live on that surplus value, enrich myself on the surplus value that others produce. And I am clearly aware of the fact.

It is not you that is clearly aware of it; it is I.

Which I? Who is clearly aware of it?

I. I'm not you any longer.

At first it often happened that the essential Jürgen stepped right in front of the partner Jürgen, thrust him behind, put down his pen on the inkstand and said flatly: "But that's pure robbery, father. I refuse to be mixed up in that, Herr Hummel."

And then the mine and mill-owner with the diseased liver will put through the deal. At these words the partner pushed himself into the foreground again, banged his fist on the table, gave his orders and thought: Life is a battle. If once a man drops his weapons, it tramples him down. That is life. And it doesn't matter to the proletariat who it is that makes the profits, for they have to bear the brunt of it anyhow.

But it matters to you.

But it's really better for me to make the profit than the man with liver-complaint, for he doesn't know what he's doing ; he doesn't suspect for an instant that he's enriching himself with the sweat and blood of the workers.

The mine-owner's doings are not a precedent for you. Besides, it would be better for you, for your soul, for your humanity, if the other man, who doesn't know he's a rogue, made the profit. For if you go on like this, you're bound to become a conscious rogue, and later an unconscious, self-righteous rogue. In this way you would finish up as a partner. Nothing more than a partner.

I shall never come to that. But I might come to that after all, thought Jürgen. And I should be forced to accept it. Life is hard.

And suddenly he clearly heard this sentence : " The masses, harnessed to their grey yoke, must hate the lark, as it rises into the blue. . . . And that doesn't worry you. That's the point—it doesn't worry you."

" There's something queer about him," people said of Jürgen, as he stood in a crowded room at some social function, dressed in a well-cut evening-suit, controlled power in his limbs and shoulders, controlled intelligence in his eye and speech, drawing all eyes upon him, just as he had once seen himself in the green wooden fence of the park.

One day he read that the local Socialist paper could only continue publication with the help of voluntary contributions. He sent a large sum of money, and received a letter of thanks from the district committee.

With this letter of thanks in his hand, he turned to the essential Jürgen, who had nothing to say in reply, for about this time he was much discouraged.

I will serve the working-class movement in another way.

There's no doubt I can be of much more use to the movement now, with my influence and connections, than I could as a student, when I had nothing, was nothing and meant nothing. And he put the letter of thanks in a drawer.

His father-in-law came in with uplifted finger. "Herr Hummel and the firm have lost a lot of money, and yet the deal was absolutely simple and clear. And we had our information in advance of the other people."

"It was too dirty a job for me."

"This bank has been in existence for thirty-five years and never a trace of anything dirty."

The partner leaned back in his chair, and consciously allowed his essential consciousness to rise to the top. It was dull and stagnant, like a pool covered with oily, iridescent fluid. It spread over the partner and spoke of justice, morals and rectitude. "The deal was too immoral. Numbers of little people would have lost their money. I stand on the ground of justice." It was some seconds before the astonished Herr Wagner could put up his finger. "The high reputation of our business is based on justice. But we can't let an absolutely sure thing go by. The labourer is worthy of his hire. You know my philosophy of life. We've lost a considerable sum of money, and Herr Hummel's custom into the bargain, and Herr Hummel has worked with us for twenty years. All because you didn't buy those shares when they seemed to be worth nothing. 'Old Liver,' of course, snapped up the lot. He's laughing up his sleeve."

"That's true certainly," said the partner. "The little people would have lost their money anyhow."

"There, what did I tell you!"

But it also happened occasionally that Herr Wagner held up his finger and said to his wife: "That son-in-law of ours has a flair—a flair, I tell you. . . . We old people can

rest comfortably in our beds. No one could have guessed from the newspapers and the speeches in the Reichstag that there was any thought of a new protective duty. Have you read anything about it? Not the faintest sign. But this fellow has a queer past; he's interested in politics, and has certain connections with the Socialist movement—a thing we're absolutely ignorant of. He bought at a time when the smartest old foxes couldn't scent a rise. . . . Well, what did I tell you?"

On the first of May of the previous year Jürgen had been driving his car and had become entangled in a Socialist procession. There he had stuck, exposed to glances of suppressed derision and hatred.

I can think as well in the tram as in a motor-car. I don't need a car.

His essential consciousness, now pressed far into the background, found a second to say: It isn't that. It isn't that.

One must keep below a certain limit, he thought, and getting out, walked the two hundred steps to the villa. As he looked through his correspondence, he casually informed his aunt that, during the two years he had acted as her banker, her total fortune had nearly doubled.

There he's wrong. Not my total fortune. She had entrusted to him only those shares whose existence she could not keep secret, leaving the greater part of her securities with her former banker. "You've doubled your inheritance," she said. She was sitting huddled in the arm-chair, yellow, shrunken and breathing with difficulty.

And as always happened, when his aunt used the word "inheritance," he lived again in his mind an extraordinary half-hour he had once spent in a café, saw quite clearly three excited women, all talking at the same time, and the youngest woman's small hat, which appeared to consist entirely of violets.

" . . . Thought she was dying. After resisting for a long time, she confessed at last to the priest that when she was twenty she committed an indiscretion——"

" You can't be sure now that it was the only one."

" —and secretly gave birth to a son. She asked her lawyer whether the child had a claim on her money."

" But how on earth the secret ever leaked out——"

" They say the nurse in the next room heard the confession."

" —is a mystery. But it's impossible for anyone to keep a secret."

" Probably no one would have known about it at all if the nurse——"

" Even now I don't know all the details," the youngest woman said.

" Just think, she's seventy, and no one has ever had the faintest suspicion. What d'you think of that? The baby was sent abroad to be brought up secretly; you know——"

" One day he ran away."

" Probably because he was ill-treated; don't you think so? "

" His foster-mother's dead."

" And so, no one. . . . Quite lost . . . ever heard . . . not a sign! . . . anything of her *faux pas*. . . . As though she were a virgin! . . . Well, what do you think of that? . . . I wonder where the poor boy is now? "

A man of fifty, drunk, filthy, degraded, staggers down a road in America, throws up his arms, curses the world. He is stabbed to death. Or he is a sailor, and is shipwrecked and drowned. He dies in a Berlin workhouse. Works by the Taylor system in Chicago. Is an unskilled labourer on the New York docks. A municipal clerk in a little German town. And to these three women the image of

that child is as close as a physical sensation, Jürgen thought with amusement.

"The poor child must . . . such a disgrace for the respectable . . . be found . . . and old-established family of Kolbenreiherr."

Struck by this unexpected blow, Jürgen nearly fell from his chair.

His aunt had never in her life regretted anything so deeply and painfully as that confession—not even the youthful indiscretion itself. When she had confessed she completely and unexpectedly recovered her health. And Jürgen had never seen anyone who had laughed so helplessly, who had been so deeply shaken by laughter, as Elisabeth. Nor had he ever thought it possible to experience such a feeling of compassion and sympathy for his aunt.

So even she wanted to live; and life had touched her but once. He thought this as he looked at her, now that she resembled a tough old oak-root, decaying at last. How she used to torment me! How utterly that woman, who once allowed herself to be embraced by a lover, is drowned and submerged! What an existence!

Since she herself had dealt this blow to the honour of the family, her strength had been broken. Her twelve question-marks had turned white. "You'll very soon have everything," she said. "Everything!" Her glance flickered and the yellow death's-head rose from the pillow.

Jürgen thought: Unless the child turns up one day and says: Here I am. I am the heir.

He walked over to the lift that had now been installed in the house, went up to the second storey, which had now been added, and thought of his own child.

Whenever he was reminded of his aunt's son—and this happened frequently, for Elisabeth would often burst into

sudden laughter—he thought of Katharina's son. He did not dare to send her money.

It would be easier, he thought, to get in touch with my aunt's son, who is probably dead—or if he's alive, has not the faintest notion whose son he is—than to communicate with my son, who is lying in a laundry basket, no more than an hour's walk from here. . . . Or perhaps he can walk by now? . . . It's quite true that she lives in another world. "A strange girl," Jürgen murmured, and hearing Elisabeth's clear voice, went into the drawing-room.

The carpet blared with colour. Between the decorative curves of huge fleur-de-lys and water-lilies—blue, red and violet—and the bright green reeds on a gold ground, which represented the sea, the same faun was depicted in every square yard, trying to catch the same nymph and never being able to reach her. Jürgen had counted thirty-three nymphs.

The drawing-room reminded him of the room at the Sinsheimers', where terror of his father's corpse had sprung upon him. It was full of black, immovably heavy, richly carved oak furniture, on which cherubs, so fat that they threatened to burst, dragged, effortlessly and with heavenly smiles, huge horns of plenty from left to right round a magnificent centre-piece, while cupids sitting above were playing the flute. Apart from the furniture, there were many singing, playing, mewling, dancing wedding-presents, and useful objects that could never be used. Among these was a big cage containing a stuffed parrot, which had all the necessities of life: a drinking bowl, and a seed-pan filled with wooden seed. There were also two silver epergnes shaped like the Eiffel Tower and laden with brand-new pears, grapes, apples and peaches of coloured plush. These had come as a wedding present from Frau Sinsheimer and were just as well preserved as

on the day they were given her as a present at her own wedding. Two great artificial palms, supported by stands with yellow storks' legs, darkened the window.

"I repeat: You can't look a gift-horse in the mouth," Frau Wagner declared with annoyance. During the honeymoon Jürgen's aunt had been lying seriously ill as a result of the alarming spread of the scandal, and Frau Wagner had been left to arrange the furnishing of the flat alone.

"There are all sorts of animals in this flat," replied Elisabeth crossly, "and a great number of fabulous creatures, but there isn't a horse." She looked round her, from a black lacquer coal-box, never used, on which was a painting of the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt, to a silk screen more than six feet high, on which was embroidered a life-sized stork drawing three infants in a sort of sling out of a pond. Between these objects an elephant was swinging its trunk slowly and gravely to and fro. The clock-face on its forehead represented Africa. Frau Wagner had telegraphed to the factory for this clock, after paying a visit to Frau Sinsheimer.

Arm in arm, Jürgen and Elisabeth left the drawing-room. And the essential Jürgen that walked behind, keeping step with him, saw Katharina go from the gas-cooker to the laundry basket, where their son was lying. In her hand was a white plate, full of gruel.

Katharina seemed a great way off, but her figure was quite distinct; it had not the vagueness it had had when Jürgen lay, a convalescent, in his invalid chair. "It varies."

"What varies?" asked Elisabeth.

"One's mood. Sometimes one is serious, then cheerful again. And sometimes one is in what you might call a divided mood."

"If it were not so, life would be too tedious."

Frau Wagner was still turning over the pages of an album, bound in pressed pigskin and fitted with a tiny gold padlock, which contained the presentable ancestors of the Wagner family. Gentlemen exhibited their moustaches, brides their wedding-dresses. Staring photographic eyes. Wishes were fulfilled. Men stood erect in life, their fists on the edges of fragile tables. Women with eyes half closed, and elaborate coiffures drooping towards one shoulder, showed that they could not live without ideals. Children were still struggling with naturalness.

Frau Wagner closed the album. The much-scarred face of a student in full uniform, armed to the teeth, closed upon that of an old woman on her death-bed. "All that money and all that trouble, and now they're not satisfied with the furniture." Frau Wagner looked round, her head resting in her hand.

Half an hour later, as Jürgen passed, he saw Frau Wagner still sitting in the drawing-room, her head still in her hand, motionless and sad. The expensive hat, trimmed with heron's feathers, had slipped a little to one side.

It would be too great a blow for her. We shall have to get used to the tons of furniture and the whole menagerie; in fact we have got used to it. And after all, it's not very important. Life presents other problems. Quite different problems, he thought. But he could not find them. He could find nothing worth exerting himself for. That day the dead loneliness that surrounded him and filled him and permeated the whole house drove him forth again an hour before he was due to leave.

His aunt was lying in bed. She looked reflectively at a picture of the Virgin. Her yellow, thin-jointed fingers

held an open cash-box, in which she kept a list of all her securities.

Jürgen loved to go to a joiner's workshop, near the stopping-place of the tram, and there to talk with the old master joiner and watch the men at work, till the tram came along. The joiner's shop, the shavings, the smell of wood and glue, were for Jürgen the tangible, visible expression of a warm, simple life, such as he had desired for himself ever since he had been a partner in the bank.

"It was before your mother was born, and, Lord! years before you were even thought of, that my father made the furniture for your grandparents. I was an apprentice then, and your aunt was a lively youngster of ten."

"What sort of a child was my aunt?" asked Jürgen, suddenly moved with sympathy again.

"There, look at that—that saw-bench was her horse. She used to ride that saw-bench every day. And very often she'd simply disappear. Couldn't find a trace of her anywhere! And then we've often pulled her out of the shavings. She'd dig herself in, cover herself over, and then jump out all of a sudden like a little imp. Never wanted to go home. How she used to stamp and howl! . . . She was a wild one. Hard to manage."

"What a surprising thing!"

"Life quietened her down, later on. . . . Here comes your tram."

Jürgen showed his season-ticket to the conductor, who smiled and motioned him to put it away. "That's all right. We know each other."

I should never have thought it. I should never have thought it possible.

"You don't need to show me your season-ticket any more. You've been travelling four times a day for two years."

If a wild, unruly, self-willed child can become what my aunt has become, can be so ruined by life, what sense is there in speaking of individual responsibility? The circumstances are to blame. It was the same with Katharina's pretty friend, the girl with the mild heart, so delicate and sensitive, who has now become a damned society woman and the wife of the Public Prosecutor. . . . But is it our circumstances after all? . . . Who can decide whether a person would have had the strength to go on fighting and suffering, or whether, stronger than his strength, were the conditions and the living desires within him? Nowadays it needs a good deal of strength to make one's way in the world. How much more, to take upon one's shoulders the cause of others, and carry that forward! The best thing is to make your own way first, and then to use yourself and your influence and power in the service of others.

But what will happen to you meanwhile, while you are making your way? What will happen to this damned banker, Kolbenreihner? asked the scarcely audible voice of Jürgen's repressed consciousness. And suddenly it uttered a terrible warning which Jürgen felt and perceived but dimly, which could not force its way immediately into the territory of the new consciousness, which had conquered with increasing frequency during the last few years.

Once more that threat escaped from the profoundest depths of his being and rose up as a sign of an inevitable and mortal danger. For a second Jürgen was inwardly paralysed, as he had been the night before, when, in a nightmare, some alien power had paralysed his will and forced him to nail up the coffin in which his living self was still lying.

"How long have you been working on this route?"

And while the conductor said reflectively: "Ten—no,

eleven years," Jürgen's repressed consciousness made a third desperate assault, and repeated its terrible warning. Jürgen's spine froze, as it had done once before in the southern seaport.

"This woven bast is good-wearing stuff, isn't it?"

"Yes." The conductor, too, tested approvingly with his strong fingers the woven bast of which the backs of the seats were made. He walked out on to the rear platform. He put his finger to his cap, and the young girl typist replaced her season-ticket in her handbag, looking at life with a serious eye. The trees of the avenue flew backward past the window.

That's only nerves, thought Jürgen, referring to the threat. . . . Two years! Time I eased off for a few weeks. I must have a change. Get away somewhere. I've earned it. . . . These wonderful, warm, autumn days! It will be wonderful to get away.

As they reached the end of the avenue, the streets grew narrower, the traffic thicker, the noise louder and the air fouler. The typist came and sat in the car, acknowledged her employer's greeting with a grave nod, and began reading a book. She was the daughter of a labourer who worked in Herr Hommes's paper-mills, and she had been in the book-keeping department of Wagner and Kolben-reiher's Bank since she was sixteen.

That morning Jürgen had been down in person to get the yearly statement of his aunt's investments from the book-keeper, and had seen the girl for the first time. As she sits there now, reading her book, she's withdrawn into herself exactly as Katharina was when she sat in the public park as a girl of fifteen. The same quietly observant, grave look, which Katharina has now. But this girl's younger. Much younger, of course. Outwardly quite different. Her figure's rather fuller. And that glance of

hers ! . . . A new generation is ripening and taking up the conflict, he thought suddenly.

She's pretty. Very pretty ! . . . Only a question of money. . . . A serious young person though. . . . And therefore unusually attractive. . . . She wouldn't be able to resist her employer. . . . Mentally he undressed her.

A white-haired old woman, sixteen stone in weight, with a tremendous bosom, climbed in and sat opposite Jürgen.

The labourer has nothing but this daughter, and she's powerless against her master. I'm not responsible for circumstances. . . . Life burns up, wild and beautiful, and asks to be lived. And he wondered where and how he could seduce his pretty young employee. "Why are you laughing?" he asked, good-humouredly, of the fat woman.

"It's thirty-one years ago," she said smiling, holding out both hands. "Herr Kolbenreih, I was the first to hold you in my arms. You were as big as that."

All the passengers smiled at the old midwife. The girl turned a page, looked up at Jürgen and smiled also.

"What did I do? What was I like?" I couldn't do it. There might be a public scandal. And it would be all up with my authority.

- "You yelled. You yelled, I tell you, as though you were being crucified. You didn't want to be born. You didn't want to be born at all."

Even the conductor grinned.

"Terminus !" . . . "Comrade," he said to the typist, "we've got the district meeting to-night. Tell your father not to forget."

"But it's all turned out well, you see. You've grown into a tall, handsome gentleman. A fine gentleman !"

Unfortunately I must think of my position. I'm a

director. One's authority must be maintained, he thought, as he walked behind the girl towards the bank. The liveried porter swung open the door.

"No one can satisfy all his desires and appetites," he said, turning over the pages of the telephone-book, and asked for Adolf Sinsheimer's number. "Moreover, I can get the same thing with less risk, and probably in a more alluring form, if this girl at the Oriental Salon is really like Katharina."

"I can't get home to dinner," he informed Elisabeth by telephone, and she immediately telephoned to the man who was then her lover, a painter, that she would come to his studio for an hour that evening.

Jürgen's four schoolfellows were waiting outside the door, whose lintel rested on the necks of two marbled figures of Hercules, just as they had waited years before outside the little wine restaurant. Adolf held his walking-stick as though it were a candle. "I've told them we're coming. . . . Still the same old whore of a landlady! Do you remember, Jürgen, we came here one night from the Corso restaurant? But they were different girls then. Two wash-basins in each room. Everything done properly. Just as if you were in Berlin."

Jürgen recognised the stairway, which rested on pillars and was decorated with panels of marble-plaster. A flickering candle, a tall coiffure, two large black eyes and a mauve dressing-gown came noiselessly down the stairs. The painted landlady put her forefinger to her lips and led the way up.

"Why the devil all this hush-hush business? Why don't we switch on the lights?" cried the artillery officer, in the blustering voice of his old battery commander, who served him as a model.

The landlady put her finger to her lips. The barrister

hid his wallet in a secret pocket in the lining of his waistcoat, and smiled.

"Because it is a habit of human faces to smile," said Jürgen to himself, and thought tenderly of the Jürgen who, in order to conceal his boyish uncertainty, had addressed the girls like an experienced old roué. To-day he walked into the Oriental Salon as casually as though he had been entering his office at the bank.

The whole action centred round the carpets. Small low tables. The girls sat or reclined on couches, or on cushions on the floor.

"Now, you little filly, chest out!" shouted the artillery officer in the tone of his battery commander, and pompously unbuckled his sabre, with the air of a man who is only at home with horses and recruits.

"Well, and how are you? You're a little peach, aren't you?" Since Adolf had been sole proprietor of the button-export house, he had acquired the habit of speaking saucily, like the Berliners, and indeed of behaving in every way like his models, the great Berlin exporters, with whom he was now doing business.

A girl lying on a couch held out her little hand to him. With her black hair and amber-yellow complexion, she looked suitably oriental. She coquetted indolently with her soft hip, which rose in a slow curve out of a slit in her flame-coloured wrap.

"Nice little bit, aren't you?"

Jürgen shook his head: It's not Adolf Sinsheimer speaking, it's the Berlin exporter.

The artillery officer stood with legs astride, firm and upright as his battery commander, took off his hat and sighed as he wiped his forehead, which was not only perfectly dry but divided into two parts: below, deep brown like his face; above, white and boyish.

He looks like an old violator of children, thought Jürgen, as a liveried footman with a smooth, quiet, foxy face brought in the champagne. The footman and the landlady together had founded and financed the establishment, and each drew half the net profits.

They sat down in a cushioned corner. The barrister drew back his shoulders, thrust forward his head and held the champagne glass under his arm-pit. "Good health!" he said to Adolf, whose little Oriental lay rolled up in the corner, one hip arched upward, tempting him with her great soft thigh.

"A dozen bottles of Rotspon would suit me better than this women's drink!" The battery commander drank up, slammed down the delicate glass on the table, lifted a blonde of just seventeen on to his lap with a rough, semi-paternal movement, and pressed her small head to his broad chest.

The barrister chose the eldest and prettiest—a cool girl of twenty-four, who had a banking account, and had remarked ten minutes before to a man who wanted to stay another hour: "I must be efficient!" The two leaned back on the couch, arm in arm.

The barrister was speaking of the Public Prosecutor, Carl Lenz. ". . . and next week he's got a murder case. If he gets the death sentence, he's a made man. There'll be a great career before him." He jerked his head forward, holding the champagne glass under his arm-pit: "Good health!"

And I was once intended to be some sort of blockhead like that. Jürgen could not help smiling at the behaviour of his old schoolfellows. It's not the barrister A., but an impersonal barrister; not the button exporter S., but an impersonal exporter and artillery officer, all sitting here and having feelings, he thought. And later it will not be

even a barrister, exporter and artillery officer that take the girls in their arms, but the life-force, the life-force pure and simple.

A folding-door opened. Jürgen had been behaving with easy reserve, like one who knows life and lets it take its course, but now he started back.

Katharina stepped into the room, held out her hand coolly and sat down at Jürgen's side.

He looked in dismay at her bent neck, her small, firm mouth. And was immediately afraid that as soon as she opened her mouth to speak, he would lose the completeness of the illusion.

"Did I promise you too much?" called Adolf Sinsheimer, whose hand was resting on the rounded hip of the girl with the amber skin. "What did I tell you?"

With the rapidity of thought, his fear suddenly veered round and became a breathless anxiety lest even the tone of her voice should prove to be that of Katharina. Then I should have to knock these swine down, he thought, trembling, and in his imagination he placed himself protectively in front of Katharina. Simultaneously, a longing so intense burst into the emotional emptiness and sterile loneliness of the last few years, that for a second his whole body was paralysed.

His eyes were no longer in the Oriental Salon; they saw Katharina as she had looked as a girl.

She was standing under the gas-bracket. She moved, turning her face squarely towards him. And as her lips moved, Jürgen's trembling lips moved in sympathy. It was as though at that second he glimpsed once more the intangible mystery of life.

The amber girl suddenly sat up, and repeated with a laugh, speaking so loudly that all could hear, the request Adolf Sinsheimer had made for a specimen for his collection.

It was not the conscious realisation of all he would have to give up—his partnership, power and position—that impelled Jürgen's hand; his hand went out of itself to the champagne-glass. He emptied and filled it; emptied it, stared at the girl, emptied it.

The others also drank quickly and deeply. Snatching hands. Girls' cries, as they defended themselves, and then surrendered.

Jürgen, completely drunk, had ceased to feel. He filled his glass. Emptied it. Stared at Katharina's double, whose mouth curved in a line of scarce perceptible irony. She wore her hair short.

Of a sudden, he felt something sharp shoot up inside him. His two selves were united. He staggered to his feet.

The couples vanished into the girls' cubicles, which were separated from each other by thin walls of plaster.

"Katharina, my wonderful love," babbled the drunken Jürgen, whose face was suddenly wet with tears. He grasped at Katharina's double, in whose face the irony had given place to unconcealed repugnance.

With an indifferent glance she let fall her chemise.

"Your eyes! Oh! your eyes!"

Body threw itself on body.

His violated feelings burst forth and screamed:
"Katharina!"

The artillery officer was still blustering in the next room: "Now, you little filly!" As though neither he nor his model, the battery commander, were lying with the blonde of seventeen, but the primordial battery commander, who fell, centuries ago, to dust.

The footman with the foxy face entered the deserted Salon, listened without moving a muscle to the sounds that came from the four rooms, opened the window and looked

out at the lighted quadrangles of glass—the windows of artists' studios—that hung far away in the starry sky. All the artists had their studios in this quarter of the town.

Behind one of these shining squares Elisabeth was lying, fair and naked, on the broad Renaissance bed of her lover. He was a small, lithe Southerner, with a growth of blue-black hair.

When the footman entered the Salon with the coffee-cups, the barrister was there, standing in front of a mirror. He was parting his hair from his forehead to the nape of his neck, and the parting was exactly in the middle. The girl looked first at her polished nails, then, ice-cold and without a trace of interest, at the barrister. And he looked back from the mirror, ice-cold and without a trace of interest, at the girl.

Half an hour later, the footman, finger on lips, quietly unlocked the street door and let the party out. Adolf put his hand to his tie, which was faultlessly tied. Without a bottle of Rotspon inside him, declared the artillery officer, he would never venture into the trap again. And Jürgen, once more sober and elegantly casual, concealed a smile at the artilleryman's posturings.

Elisabeth lay reading on the sofa, dressed in a white silk wrap. She gave him her hand frankly and charmingly, and looked ingenuously into his face. Where had he been? She was as simple and fresh as a large pear which Phinchen had plucked in the garden that afternoon, and which lay now on the table within reach. Beside it was a pointed knife.

What a fresh, clean atmosphere in my house! thought Jürgen.

"I was out this evening, too. Spent an hour with the old people," said Elisabeth, freely and without constraint.

She was so completely occupied with herself and her right to enjoyment that the lie slipped from her lips like pure truth.

As she spoke, her fingers touched the tips of her breasts, which were still rosy. And she asked again: "Why don't I have a baby?" She wanted to have a lot of children. "I've just been bathing."

"Did you enjoy yourself round at the flat? How did you get on with the old folks?" I'll see I never go to such places with those dummies again. They move when the strings are pulled. . . . We're all puppets on strings. But who, or what is it, that sits in the centre of life and works the strings? "Well?"

"Just the same. Father talked about money, then the Stock Exchange and then money again. . . . You know it's all so stuffy there in the flat. He can't take hold of things. Everything seems to elude him. He's been bored to death since he retired from business. His life is absolutely empty."

"Last time we were there, he said he wanted to buy a little estate and cultivate it himself. Nature, nature, grass, carrots, he said. Why doesn't he do it?"

"After eight days in the country the tedium would drive father to melancholia. But he is getting melancholic as it is. He has no interest in books, art or music, the sort of things that help us to pass an idle hour. The fact that he's spent his whole life on the Stock Exchange cuts him off from them. He's too old for women. All he has left is his meals. But since he's not allowed to eat much, he has nothing left but boredom. I think you'll soon have him back in business. He can't stand it."

"When American capitalists grow old and find themselves in his position, they spend their leisure hours in becoming moral. But that doesn't prevent them looking

after their affairs with skill and profit," said Jürgen, smiling ironically.

Elisabeth sat up with a lithe movement. "A few years ago I was at a sanatorium with my parents. There was a big yard there, where the old men, exporters, bankers and privy councillors, all in bathing costumes, horribly fat or horribly lean and hairy—you should have seen their great slack bellies!—had to saw wood, or shovel sand into wheelbarrows. They wheeled the sand across the yard to the far corner, emptied it out, shovelled the same sand in again and wheeled it back. In and out, to and fro! Always the same sand. . . . Terrible! Work like that would drive me mad!"

"In China the worst punishment for criminals is to be made to do that sort of meaningless work. . . . After all, many people who have always seemed quite normal go mad. Melancholia and the like! Can't think what to do with themselves—hang about in sanatoriums and clinics for nervous diseases, or go back to business, as you say, and go on treading the gold-mill, till they die of chalk in the arteries. These old money-grubbers! . . . We won't let that happen to us, will we?"

He dropped on his knees before the sofa. "Do you think," he asked slowly, smilingly, his eyes fixed on hers, "that I could still have a bath?"

Above the double bed in their bedroom was a red lamp, with a glass cupid kneeling on it. The cupid still held a bow in his little hands. Once there had also been a glass arrow, pointed towards the occupants of the bed, which shone with a blue light when the lamp was switched on, but, years ago, on the first night after their return from their honeymoon, Jürgen had broken off the glass arrow. There were limits.

When Jürgen came back from his bath, Elisabeth was

already lying in bed, her hands crossed under her head. With a playful smile she switched off the brightly shining lamp on the bedside table, while he smilingly switched off the other. The light above their bed shone redly.

What is a year, when each day resembles the others and life is without hardships? . . . Only a day! An unconscious breath, thought Jürgen, when a year had flown past, filled with office work, theatre-going, picture-buying, meals, the red light above the bed, the office again. Time flew so fast that it stood still. His fortune grew greater. His reputation rose higher.

"You sit in an arm-chair or lie in bed, and next morning you find yourself so and so much richer," he once had said jestingly to his aunt. And she had answered: "I shall leave everything to you."

Again Herr Wagner began to appear in the office punctually every morning. It was a long time since his partner had given him cause for complaint. "Our son-in-law's a thoroughly sound, capable fellow. He puts the interests of the bank and the customers before everything." Herr Wagner often made this remark to his wife, and she always answered: "But it's—well, I can't understand what makes them dissatisfied with that furniture, but at any rate I'm glad to hear he looks after the business."

All this had happened of itself. Gradually, without his being aware of it, life had become a groove down which Jürgen rolled through the years.

He was known as a generous philanthropist and patron of art. With unflinching taste he had collected a number of pictures and antiques, and was storing them for the present in an empty room at the villa. He wanted to buy an old mansion that stood on a quiet square, the largest in the town, and furnish it according to his own taste.

"One man fills the emptiness of his life by collecting

pfennigs that are older than himself, or expensive pictures by old masters or the leading moderns, or by building models, which in the course of years grow into Swiss chalets no bigger than a man's fist, with pasture, dairy-maids, cows and lads looking in at the windows." Jürgen said this to a friend of his, a manufacturer, who owned a huge villa full of old Gothic wood-carvings.

"Yes, you must have something. And I get my things cheap," said the manufacturer.

"That's where the pleasure comes in. If you don't mind how much you pay, of course, you can get a perfect collection of any sort you like delivered complete to your house door."

"One man accepts as his philosophy the words of Buddha: 'Pass by the world, it is nothing'—and stays at home in a fine house with bath, warm water, central heating and every comfort. Another gives large sums of money to charity, possibly to silence the little voice within, or supports talented young artists. I do both, and go in for collecting into the bargain," he concluded ironically.

A few months later Jürgen said to the same man: "The bourgeois attitude to life is this: Everyone must do his duty. By doing his duty, each works for all. Their efforts are complementary. Thus arises the wealth and culture of the country, numbered houses for people to live in, kitchens, crockery, drawers full of linen, paved roads, schools, laws and order. All because everyone does his duty. And workhouses, policemen, law-courts and prisons for those who don't do their duty. . . . Very good. Perhaps they're right. But we are not the sort of people who go about bursting with self-righteousness. Our knowledge and intelligence and possessions lay heavier obligations on us."

And he placed his hand on a dispatch-box containing

the notes for the book he had planned, *Economics and the Individual Soul*. After dinner he read the evening paper.

His days passed, borne along and protected by habit and respectability, unbroken by painful events, passed through him and fell behind him, as a busy street rolls past and yet remains behind.

But sometimes in his dreams his violated self arose and cried out the terrible warning that could no longer penetrate into his new consciousness. The distance was now too great, and between his threatening self and his inner ear lay the experience of many years. It was this experience, together with his constant, millionfold striving for success, enjoyment and reputation, that had built up his new consciousness : an unbroken, protective wall.

His self threatened. He groaned in his sleep. He saw the grey street, down which millions were marching to the world's factory-door, grey and noiseless as ghosts. He saw the gas-cooker, with Katharina standing beside it, the faintest trace of irony in her glance. And he implored her : " Let your hair grow again. What has happened to you ? Tell me what has happened to you."

Elisabeth shook her head at sight of his wildly contorted face, behind which his violated self was fighting vainly for life, forcing tears between his closed lids. She waked the groaning man, and he could not remember what he had dreamed.

With a sigh of relief, he smiled at life, lying there by his side. The birds were singing in the garden. Even the thousand birds on the carpet of the sunny bedroom were chirping.

" What a queer man you are ! You're smiling with tears in your eyes."

And Jürgen, as he gently drew her scented head to his

breast : " That is life. Laughter and tears in one." The oppression had completely left him.

After his bath and breakfast he went into the garden, inhaled delightedly the warm, scented air, looked across the fence at his neighbour's freshly watered lettuce-beds, which lay sparkling in the sun. He stopped at every rose tree ; he was delighted by the great, coloured glass balls, which reflected a little image of his face as the sun struck them, and he felt a desire to go on working at a water-supply he was laying on. He had begun this work some time before with the object of erecting a fountain in his garden. His family doctor had ordered him manual labour.

The digging and shovelling did him good. The twelve glass balls, standing on posts, formed a circle, and in the centre of the circle the fountain was to play. A life-sized bronze figure of a youth, bought from a needy young sculptor as a decoration for the fountain, knelt with bent head, its hands as though fettered behind its back, under the guelder rose.

In the next garden his neighbour was singing the National Anthem. Elisabeth, wearing a light summer frock, was sitting in a deck-chair, looking over at her strong, healthy husband. Phinchen served rolls and butter on a table under the nut tree, where his aunt used to sit at her crochet-work. Now she was lying in bed, unable to die.

With shirt-sleeves rolled up to his shoulders and a cigar in his mouth, Jürgen contemplated his work with satisfaction. " Next year we'll start a little kitchen garden : beds of lettuce and vegetables and a few small fruit trees. Manual labour is good for the health. It makes you bend your back, you know."

Birds flitted from bush to bush. A blackbird snatched

a worm out of the fresh-turned earth, flew the length of the garden close to the ground, and disappeared under the guelder rose. •

The midday chimings of numerous church-clocks combined, above the town, to one note, radiated outward to the gardens. Jürgen put down his spade punctually, as he was accustomed to put down his pen at the office. After luncheon he slept. The newspaper had slipped from his hand.

Then he sat down at his writing-desk, in front of the open dispatch-case of crocodile leather. To his right was a miniature bust of Schiller, crowned with a tiny laurel wreath; to his left, a pen-wiper—a cock of coloured cloth with glass eyes—and in the middle an inkstand in the form of a rearing bronze stag, with seven pen-holders on its antlers. “And now to work!” he cried, and rubbed his hands.

In the distance he heard the sound of a child’s trumpet. He carefully took the laurel wreath, no bigger than a wedding-ring, from Schiller’s head, examined it closely and put it on his finger. He stretched till his joints cracked and his mouth opened to the size of an egg, then he took up his pen again, and looked out at the Sunday afternoon, which, split into billions of tiny particles, streamed in through the window, penetrated every crack, and even forced itself through the walls themselves.

“The sunshine is different from what it is on weekdays, and every sound has a different tone. A disgusting tone! Unbearable! There’s no protection from it! . . . Here I am, standing, so to speak, at the height of my powers; I have no pains, no troubles, and yet I don’t know what to do with my powers. . . . Even the sparrows chirp differently on a Sunday from what they do in the week,” said Jürgen, conscious of a dark pressure in his

breast. He opened a book, put it aside again, took up his pen. Suddenly he had a clear impression that the inkpot had smiled mockingly. "Nonsense," he said angrily to himself.

The desire for Monday, for his accustomed work at the office, for his usual visit to the Stock Exchange, shot through him. Jürgen could not have said why and when he crossed to the window. The group of pines in the garden stood unmoving. One branch hung down, disturbing the symmetry. That branch will hang down like that to-morrow and the day after and in ten years' time. This stupid Sunday atmosphere robs one of the power to think. And there's this murderous furniture !

The sky was a uniform blue, and looked as though it could never again darken into night. The notes of the child's trumpet swam on a distant pool of sound. The neighbour was singing in his garden. Jürgen raised his left shoulder, then his right ; his left leg, his right leg. The movements increased to a suppressed dance. The glass balls stood without moving.

As it swung to and fro in the drawing-room, the elephant's trunk left, as it were, white threads in the air. It stopped in a diagonal position. Jürgen clearly saw the slanting pendulum. Yawning, with hands raised above his head, like a prisoner who is led away at the point of a revolver, he went into the drawing-room and stared stupidly at the swinging pendulum.

The Sunday noises entered the open window of the living-room, where Elisabeth also was suffering from boredom. "Well, what's it to be ? The old people ? Or a walk in the park ? . . . I can't understand your objection to cars !"

"You mustn't go above a certain limit, sweetheart," he said, yawning. "But we can have a ride if you like. Your

old people can send round *their* car. . . . That's a bore, too ! ”

“ The study in pink and my portrait have been on show since Thursday. With twenty other things of his, the best he's done.” And she talked of the great progress her lover, the artist, had made. “ Let's go to his exhibition.”

“ Why not straight to the dentist while we're about it ? ”

“ Then let's call on someone.”

A great, grey, empty gullet swallowed every suggestion.

“ Who can we call on ? They're all sure to be sitting at home, wondering what to do. It's a good thing every day isn't Sunday. . . . Let's go to the circus ! There's a girl appearing there to-day for the first time. She dives head first from a height of ninety feet into a tank of water fourteen feet long and six feet wide. Think of it—that tiny hole in the ring, and that tremendous height ! Marvellous ! It oughtn't to be allowed. The tank is edged with sharp, jagged iron. If the girl was half an inch out in her dive, it would slice her arm and shoulder from her body. But it ought to be exciting. At any rate, better than sitting here.”

The garden gate closed behind them. Jürgen looked back at his well-kept garden, examined the shining brass plate engraved simply with the name, Kolbenreiherr, and raised his hat to his aunt who, staring rigidly in front of her, hung like an old portrait in the frame of the window.

The girl dived first from a height of thirty-six feet, then from a height of fifty-four feet. After that she was drawn up by a rope to a diving-board built under the dome of the circus, ninety feet from the floor. From this height, the circus-ring looked like a child's hoop lying on the ground, and the tank like a black pencil-stroke. Jürgen explained

in detail that the danger lay, not so much in missing the narrow tank, as in the fact that, with the terrific impetus of her fall, the girl would smash her head on the bottom, if she failed, the instant she reached the water, to make a lightning turn towards the surface.

The band stopped. The audience fell silent. The girl looked down at the pencil-stroke, into which she had to throw herself, and stretched out her arms. The women looked away. Even Elisabeth looked away.

"You can't call this boring. There's a way of passing the time, even on a Sunday afternoon," said Jürgen. While his aunt, with a dread quite foreign to her nature, opened the Bible and read sentences written in the grey dawn of time, sentences she had often read, listened to, spoken and sung, but which meant nothing to her even now. She felt she was going to faint, was troubled by the anxious thought that, if she fainted, anyone could come and look at her. Perhaps she would have a different face from her normal face.

The girl's body made a smooth turn in the air and dropped head foremost. Her hands were pressed together as though in prayer, as she fell, like a leaden fish, past the topmost gallery, past the orchestra on their raised platform, sheer into the depths, heading with tenfold acceleration towards the black pencil-stroke and the rapidly expanding circle of sawdust. Meanwhile, Jürgen's aunt looked once more over the country, as it lay spread out to the horizon, which was already touched by reddish twilight. Suddenly she swayed and collapsed.

"The old people always stick at home," said Jürgen. "I'm sure they'd be amused if they came here." He spoke through a storm of applause, while his aunt lay unconscious on the floor, the look on her face still unchanged.

A doctor was fetched, and opened one of her veins. She recovered. By ten o'clock they were all three in bed. Elisabeth got up again to put on a fresh nightdress. As she stepped out of the old one, before she slipped into the new, Jürgen, harnessed like a cab-horse to his habits, switched on the red light.

Next morning, a few hours before her death, his aunt received a visitor. There were now seven-and-twenty oranges on her tray. Fighting for air, already overshadowed by death, she expressed her pleasure and thanks for the fruit.

The priest and the acolytes were coming at five o'clock to administer extreme unction. The dying woman overcame her mortal weakness and sat up once more in bed. "Perhaps this is the last time I shall speak to you, Jürgen—"

"Nonsense, auntie. You're not going to die."

"—last time I shall speak to you. I've always done my duty. To you, Jürgen, and to everyone else. But above all, to you! You've become a highly respected man. To some extent, you have to thank me for that. Do you remember how it all happened? . . . A highly respected man!"

All the blood drained from Jürgen's face. She did not notice his pallor or confusion. She described, stammering out her words with difficulty, what would have happened to him, if he had continued the pursuit of what he called self-sacrifice and devotion. "But now I can die in peace."

Jürgen heard no more. She drew his head down on the pillow beside hers, and made him promise that he would go on following the path he had now taken. "Remember, what you promise to me on my death-bed, you must perform."

Jürgen did not know what he had promised. Past and future came tumbling down together. He did not hear

what his aunt said when she spoke of the shares she had concealed from him.

"You must not sell these shares till my banker advises you to. Above all, keep the tenements mortgaged! And don't spend too much on repairs! Labour and materials cost money."

"Then I shall have to pay mortgage-interest," said Jürgen's mouth from the pillow.

Her hands still lay on his head. "But the property tax is much higher than the mortgage-interest. That's why I've mortgaged the houses up to the hilt," she explained, fighting for breath. "I've put the money into shares and paid the mortgage-interest with the dividends. In that way you avoid paying property tax, because the houses don't belong to you."

"The houses don't belong to me?"

"Only nominally! Only nominally they don't belong to you." She was too weak to go on speaking.

The bell rang at the outer door. A smell of incense filled the room. Jürgen tried to calm his aunt, but was so confused that he said: "With the dividends from the shares I pay the property tax."

"No, the mortgage-interest!"

"But there are much better investments. Why should I——"

"Get my solicitor to explain it to you."

"—why should I take up mortgages, when I have cash and securities, which——"

"My solicitor," whispered his aunt.

The priest and the acolytes came in. The censer swung three times across the bed. "Deliver this soul from the gates of hell. Dominus vobiscum. Et cum spiritu tuo."

When Jürgen returned, in his frock-coat and black

gloves, from the funeral, the villa was still full of the scent of incense. He stood in the room where she had died, a white handkerchief in his left hand, his top hat in the right, holding it by the brim, so that he could have caught a rubber ball with it.

Three weeks later, when his aunt's solicitor had informed him that she had left three times the fortune he had expected, a faint smell of incense still clung to the rooms. It reminded Jürgen of the day of his father's death, of the mental suffering, the uncertainty, the struggles, that had filled his youth. Now, standing on the firm, broad, secure foundation of the present, he could look back at them with a smile.

There in the past, a sensitive youth was staggering through life, wounded by a word, driven to sorrow and desperation by a glance, condemned by life as it is to ceaseless suffering. In his youthful eagerness for an unattainable ideal, for a truth that does not exist, the young man often walked on the brink of death. . . . Now he was sitting in his chair, adult, mature, safe, invulnerable. And not one second of the present was poisoned or stolen from him by a yearning for the unattainable.

I managed to find my way even out of that grey cul-de-sac of Socialism, where I stuck for four years. . . . If my father could see me now he wouldn't say: Well, you ignominious nonentity!

At a big party given by Herr Hommes, the paper manufacturer—the first social function Jürgen attended after an uneventful year of mourning—a former schoolfellow was introduced to the banker, Jürgen Kolbenreier, who was an object of interest to many people in the room. This former schoolfellow had lived for twenty years in the British Colonies, where he had founded a large cotton export business and had become a naturalised Englishman.

"What happened to your brother? I was at the high school with him. . . . I beg your pardon. I don't know what's been taking place. I'm absolutely out of touch with things," added the Britisher quickly, at sight of Jürgen's dismayed and questioning glance. He offered his apologies for having awakened painful memories.

Jürgen shrugged his shoulders. His eyes looked round, as though searching for something. "I haven't a brother."

"But my memory couldn't have played me such a trick. I was in the same class for years with a boy named Kolbenreiher. I can see him standing before me now. Nervous and highly strung, quite unusual! I often thought of him afterwards: he was a most attractive boy, but with a type of mind that would expose him to many dangers. . . . So he wasn't your brother? Merely happened to have the same name."

The dazzling dresses of the women, the candelabra, the string quartette, the small champagne tables, began to waver. Jürgen's cheeks sunk in, his face grew grey. "Have I changed so much, so terribly, that you can't recognise that boy in me?"

"So it's you!" cried the Britisher, pleased and surprised. "I should never have thought it. Really, I should never have thought it. I congratulate you most heartily. . . . What mistakes one can make! I used to think—you know, in the Colonies we're very lonely and often think of our boyhood—I used to think that that boy would either live like a hermit, or, if circumstances were favourable, do something really great—in war perhaps—or break down completely. And now—how glad I am! . . . One more proof how much a man can change with the years, can grow inwardly firmer, so to speak."

That evening Jürgen drank so much that he had to be carried into Herr Hommes' guest-room and Elisabeth had

to drive home alone. After several weeks' absence, spent in wandering aimlessly about Europe, he came back to his office. In the next room two of the bank-clerks were talking together.

One said that a year before he had unexpectedly escaped the need to pay alimony. The baby had died. But his girl had recently become a mother again.

Elisabeth was with child. Jürgen looked forward joyfully to the coming of the baby, imagined how it would look, wondered whether it would resemble him or her. Blue eyes? Or brown? he thought. And he listened to the words of the clerk, who was reckoning out to his colleague just how much of his salary would be left after the deduction of alimony. "I shan't be able to stand it."

The clerk slipped neatly into his smart overcoat. "To-day I'm going to bid farewell to youth. I'm going to be married. She has nothing. I have nothing. Our wedded bliss is based on six silver-plated coffee spoons."

He stuck a bunch of violets in his buttonhole. "I bought these specially for to-night. Flippant, what? . . . I'm afraid of this wedded bliss of ours. A man sleeps with his wife night after night. Always the same woman! You see her with her hair down, half-dressed, wearing her dressing-gown—if she has one; you eat with her, talk with her. And not about flowers and dancing, old man! The romance is soon over. In every marriage! You get used to it. Then you look for a bit of love elsewhere, what? . . . But I can't afford that on my salary. It means buying flowers, paying for drinks. And she's sure to end up by ordering something to eat. That costs a fortune. . . . Of course, the boss needn't worry about the monotony of marriage; he's got a cheque-book and a full wallet. He can buy any woman he wants. But if a man marries in our position, there's nothing for it but to bid farewell to youth."

So he thinks I needn't worry about the monotony of marriage, thought Jürgen, in the tram. At home he searched the rooms for Elisabeth and found her at last in the bedroom, where she was sitting, white-faced, on the edge of the bed. Her figure was much enlarged.

All day long Elisabeth screamed with pain, screamed through the long night into the dreary morning, when the doctor delivered her of a dead, premature child.

The bloody knife and obstetric forceps still lay on the table. The doctor, dripping with sweat, was about to take the last, desperate measures to save the mother. She thrust him away from her lacerated body. A fresh stream of blood gushed into the bed. The doctor spread a cloth over the torn corpse, and let his arms drop to his sides. Then he went out to Jürgen in the autumnal garden. The sky was full of rain, the garden damp, the air cold.

A few days later—Elisabeth had been buried and Jürgen was swathing the rose-trees in straw—he said softly to himself: "Of course the money means nothing to me. How did I come to such a detestable thought?"

The thought in question had shot up, quicker than a bird cuts across one's line of vision, with a number of other thoughts, and immediately vanished again. "Since the child is dead, the dowry falls to me."

An evil thought! But one that contains an unquestionable, legal truth. . . . No one has the power to compel or prevent the coming of a thought. He looked up at the damaged spouting, from which large drops of water were dripping in rapid succession, dripping always on the same spot, just as had happened in that yard full of garbage and rats. He hung the strips of bast over a bough and called to Phinchen to fetch a plumber. "The spouting's leaking. Up there. D'you see where I mean?"

For years Jürgen played with the idea of marrying

again. Even his father-in-law did his best to persuade him, and went so far as to suggest several eligible girls of good family. Jürgen ought to buy that mansion, he said, and furnish it properly. He was the representative of the bank.

"But as a matter of fact," said Jürgen, with a laugh, to Phinchen. "I haven't time to love a woman." The clientèle and the financial activities of Wagner and Kolbenreier expanded and increased more and more quickly.

Jürgen was a guest at houses where money was the sole topic of conversation; and at others where people had grown so rich that it was considered bad form to speak of money at all, and the conversation was entirely of humanity, philanthropy, art, mysticism, culture and Goethe. Lofty rooms in the finest style and taste. Valuable paintings, marvellous service. Young artists who had to be supported. Witty conversation. And uneasiness for the guests who were not yet so rich.

The Berlin banker, Leo Seidel, was not of this type. Jürgen gave a party in his honour for men only, when he returned for a few days to his native town. The stock-brokers weighed and examined everything Seidel said, in search of traps, just as they had weighed and examined, at Jürgen's wedding, the words of the wealthy mine- and mill-owner who suffered with his liver.

Seidel was not yet forty, but in his smart, inconspicuous clothes he looked much older, and as though from now on he could age no more. It seemed as though, with the attainment of his goal, the little freckled triangle had become stationary.

Sitting, as it were, on the peak of his ambition, he was visibly uninterested in the opinions of these industrialists and bankers, to overtake whom had been his highest aim twenty years before. Now he had left them far behind,

but he did not allow it to be seen that these hours were nothing more than a waste of time for him. He never spoke a word more than courtesy demanded.

He recalled that ten years before, when his feet were well on the road to his goal, he had still been filled with his old hatred of these fashionable, middle-class families, and had derived satisfaction from the idea that he, the derided son of a postman, could choose one of the daughters of his native town for his wife.

But, with the achievement of his ambition, this hatred had passed and indifference had taken its place. Moreover he had long since found, like Jürgen, that every married woman of this set could be had, though not perhaps at any time he chose.

Jürgen had given up going to brothels, though for years he had been a widower. "These girls are either poor creatures, out for nothing but money, who are consequently quite indifferent to us in an erotic sense, and therefore tedious; or they're sentimental little innocents, compared with the decadent refinements and audacities of our society women." Thus he had replied to Adolf Sinsheimer's repeated invitation to accompany him again to the Oriental Salon.

After the meal, Jürgen and Seidel, their coffee-cups in their hands, were standing apart from the other guests. Between them was a tall grandfather clock, whose ticking made their conversation inaudible to the stockbrokers seated at the long table. Seidel stated briefly why he had come to town. He was compelled to prevent the amalgamation, which had already begun, of several big banks, and to organise a great financial merger on his own account. Several times Jürgen nodded. "I've been considering this plan for some time, and I've already done some of the preparatory work. A fairly substantial part of this capital

is already in my hands." He looked at his guest, looked at Leo Seidel. "One grows richer and richer—why?"

"We must get hold of the raw materials, the mineral resources. Coal! If you hold the coal you can completely control production."

"Tell me," began Jürgen, after a pause, in a determined voice. He shrugged his shoulders as though to assure himself that he did not care what effect his words would have on Seidel. "Tell me, why is it your ambition to get hold of the raw materials, to control all production, or, in other words, to become the most powerful man in the country? What aim have you in view—apart from the desire to be able to satisfy every personal wish, which, of course, you've been able to do for a long time?"

Seidel looked thoughtfully in front of him.

"Power for the sake of power? Or the knowledge that, unless one bites, one is bitten? Or for your children's sake, if you have any? All this has nothing to do with any positive idea."

"The merger we have in mind would be a necessary preliminary to obtaining control of coal, other fuels and ores."

"The acceptance of the fact that intense competition would be bound to cause a war now and then, and the death of a few hundred thousands or millions of men—that is the reverse side of the same scheme, while modern civilisation can be regarded as its positive side. But all this seems a rather shaky foundation for any idea, or way of living, which humanity could end by accepting. In fact, it seems to me to be nothing more than a painful mixture of fatalism and cynicism."

Seidel had not been listening; a mechanical smile of politeness flitted over his face, and he wrote something in his notebook.

"Don't you want to answer me? Or don't you know how to answer me?"

Behind them a sudden stillness had fallen on the long table. "A prostitute went with a Jew——"

"Your mother's sewing-table is still up in my attic. Do you remember? That's twenty years ago."

"I shall expect you at my hotel in the morning, or I could bring the details to you at the bank."

Herr Hommes' laughter shattered the silence like the low hooting of a motor-horn. "I've heard that! But go on!"

"We should also control a large proportion of the chemical products, if the merger took place." Seidel mentioned the factory, the total number and present price of the shares, of which, when the merger was completed, the banks in question would own a majority.

Jürgen looked over his shoulder at the backs of those eight grey heads, opposite which were eight wine-red faces, hanging in the cigar-smoke. "Yes, we could fix the prices for a number of chemical products, such as paints, and, above all, the most important drugs used in medicine. . . . That's a pretty big thing."

Herr Wagner seized Herr Hommes by the arm, jerked his thumb over his shoulder towards Seidel, and said: "He's made some money."

"I know another version of that: The same Jew went to a knocking-shop——"

"I've heard that!" cried Herr Hommes, and burst into a roar of laughter.

Seidel mentioned the disease which attacked the workers in the chemical factories. It was very hard to get people to work in them. Nothing but generous insurance against disease would bring them to the boiling-vats. This difficulty had even depressed the market value of the shares.

"Yes, I've heard of it. The workers go yellow. But it's not a form of jaundice. All the mucous membranes become inflamed, with severe injury to the eyes. The women can't bear children; they become completely sterile."

"—and one day he found himself bankrupt," concluded the manufacturer who owned the villa full of Gothic wood-carvings. "He'd speculated rather too riskily."

"Well, what did I tell you?"

"A number of devices have been invented," said Seidel, still writing and reading in his notebook, "and the board have bought them up. But the manufacture and maintenance of these protective appliances would be much too expensive. Moreover, if they were adopted, valuable by-products would be lost."

"No, no, we're all right," replied Herr Wagner, reassuringly, to Jürgen's question. And said to Herr Hommes: "How did he do it? That's a secret you'll have to get out of him yourself. But I tell you he's made a lot of money."

"The contraction of these awful diseases by the work-people, in the absence of the necessary protective appliances, is a little worrying for those who own the shares and draw the dividends."

Seidel responded with his fleeting smile. "Should you like us to found a League of Rebels together again? . . . Just a moment!" He drew Jürgen back to the grandfather clock. "I'll tell you my other reason for coming. Perhaps you can give me some advice. There are still many people here who knew my parents, but even apart from that, I should like to found some charity. A home for babies, a hospital or an art gallery. My native town, you know!"

Jürgen threw out both hands towards the little smokers'

table, but in vain; his legs grew weak with volcanic laughter and he fell into a chair. He held up one hand, with thumb and forefinger pressed together, as though he had caught some noxious insect. "A hospital for—for your native town!"

Grasping the arms of the chair with both hands, he lay there, staring at Seidel, convulsed with laughter. Seidel's face grew so white that the ancient freckles came out more clearly, as they had done when he gave his mother's sewing-table into Jürgen's keeping, and said that the whole crowd would come to the fair to see him working on the swings.

"And that's the answer: the whole system has grown sterile. Like the workgirls who can't bear children. . . . For your native town!" As he laughed his heaving shoulder struck against the grandfather clock, which gave forth a metallic clang.

Greasy, many-voiced chuckles came from the table. Sixteen red faces turned towards Jürgen and Seidel. Sixteen questioning pairs of eyes. And Herr Hommes called: "We should like to hear that one."

"Good; you shall build a babies' home for the children the workgirls can't bear, and I a hospital for the people who died because they couldn't afford the expensive drugs, and then together we'll build an art gallery for the sake of culture."

The left half of his face was still laughing. He took Seidel's arm and drew him to the table. Then he placed his hand on his shoulder. "Herr Leo Seidel, who is, of course, a fellow-townsmen, has just told me that he is going to present his native town with a babies' home of any desired dimensions, fitted with all the latest hygienic appliances. . . . Out of—out of affection for us."

He emptied his glass. Filled it and emptied it. Began

to laugh again. This hard, powerful man—a little scoundrel, a tiny insect, who wants to be particularly respected in his native town—as a philanthropist!

Herr Hommes covered his mouth and nose with one hand, threw back his head and then threw it forward towards the table, as though he were going to sneeze. He did not sneeze; he said to Herr Wagner: “Then he must have made a lot of money.”

“Well, what did I tell you?”

Inflamed eyes, inflamed mucous membranes, inflamed ovaries, bones, lungs, inflamed machine-guns and heavy artillery, inflamed souls, suppurating souls—and a hospital for everyone, financed with the capital amassed by the system which has itself caused this world-wide inflammation. That is the answer. Hurrah, that's it! . . . And the merger will be completed. With control of the most important drugs. And I shall grow more and more powerful. And it can't be helped. There is no way out. Nothing can happen to me—for the louse is right when it thinks it can't be disinfected.

He sat astride a chair and stared about him with amusement. He put the empty glass on the floor. Suppurating souls! He began again, this time at the end, and counted on his fingers, like the metal-worker with the maimed hand. Suddenly he saw a vast plain, on which millions of people were standing motionless, staring towards him. The faces of those furthest away, of those who stood miles away, were bigger than those at the front. All the faces were yellow.

“Yellow! Yellow! Yellow! . . . Am I in China then? . . . I wanted to be an interpreter in China.”

He fell from the chair. A rubber hammer was beating darkly at the back of his head.

CHAPTER VII

PHINCHEN had to stand on tiptoe to reach his coat-collar with the brush. According to his usual custom, Jürgen stepped up and down for a moment on the same spot, as though he were trying on a new pair of trousers ; thus he worked himself properly into his suit. He took his walking-stick from Phinchen's hand and left the villa punctually. The tram-conductor, whose fourteen years on the same route had turned him grey, helped Jürgen, who had grown much heavier, on to the tram.

Instinctively Jürgen moved away from a shabbily dressed man without a nose. Apart from this workman, the tram contained a little girl who, her eyes wide open with anxiety, was learning a piece of catechism that had been set for homework. She began over and over again : " But Jesus said, Suffer the little children to come unto Me——"

The conductor came round for the tickets. The man without a nose had no money.

" But Jesus said——"

" Then you must get out."

The noseless man was determined to stay where he was. He grew excited. He had been out of work for months, he said. If he couldn't ride he would be too late to draw his out-relief. All the torments of his life collected together and changed into anger and resistance against the conductor.

The conductor also was angry. He gave the signal to

stop. "How can a man get on a tram without his fare? It can't be done!" The tram stopped. "If I let you ride without a ticket, I should lose my job."

"When a man's willing to work——!" shouted the man desperately, and broke out into abuse of the rich idlers, who did not need to work.

"Stand up! You must get out." He had to take the struggling man by the arm and drag him out of the car.

"But Jesus said——" learned the little girl, so frightened lest she should not be able to say her homework that she had taken no notice of the occurrence.

Jürgen had been reading the Stock Exchange reports and, at the same time, thinking with distress of the dream he had had the previous night. He, too, did not know why the conductor's lips and the hand that held the punch were trembling. Automatically he took out his season-ticket, to which was stuck an old photograph of himself. What a terrible, terrible dream!

The conductor was still angry. "You ought to stick a new photo on that ticket. That's not you at all." He held the photograph away from him and examined it. "You'd think that was another man altogether."

Jürgen looked into the eyes of the young man on the photograph, and they looked back at him from a vast distance, large and serious. The face of the noseless man bobbed up and down outside the window with a rhythmic movement as he ran beside the tram.

Dreams are all moonshine, my doctor says. . . . But is that terrible dream of mine just a feather, dropped by life on the wing, without any deeper significance? Even now, riding through the sunny daylight, Jürgen's heart stopped.

He was standing in a frock coat and white gloves,

surrounded by a semicircle of black-garbed witnesses. They were grouped before a headsman's block, in the middle of a brightly lighted drawing-room; he stepped back, threw up the axe—and let it hurtle down on to a man's neck. The head did not fall. And now he realised, for the first time, that it was himself, as a young student, that was kneeling at the block, and that he had to decapitate himself, in the name of life as it is. Forced on by the eyes of the twelve mute witnesses, Jürgen hacked again and again at the frightful wound in the neck, till the head of Jürgen, the student, was severed. A string orchestra stopped playing.

Tyrolese girls, with crooked mouths, handed round living ices. To avoid the necessity of eating this horrible, living ice, Jürgen forced his way through a crowd of men and women, who looked after him with shocked glances. He fled down the stairs and dashed in wild haste through the vacant moonlit streets towards his home, then through the shimmering garden.

And there, instead of the figure at the fountain, his own headless body was kneeling in the middle of the fountain basin; his hands were bound behind his back; the twelve large, coloured glass balls were standing symmetrically round him on their posts, and they changed into the twelve witnesses of the execution. The blood played in a jet from the stump of his neck. The symmetry of the twelve glass balls was disturbed by Jürgen's youthful head, which was stuck on a post in place of the yellow glass ball. It uttered a terrible threat.

"You mustn't sleep with drawn curtains when the moon is full. Don't eat a heavy meal at night," his family doctor had said. "That's also a cause of nightmares."

The schoolgirl got out, opened her catechism again as she reached the pavement, and went on learning. Jürgen

was alone in the tram. He thought over the orders he should give that morning to his general manager, regarding Stock Exchange transactions. Suddenly the corners of his mouth drew back into his cheeks ; he bared his clenched teeth, turned his head sideways and moved his lips, as though he were arguing with someone standing behind him, who was issuing orders he could not accept.

Not till he went to the rear platform and began to chat with the conductor did the tension of his face relax.

These states of mind had begun to trouble him a year before. He would go for a walk and be forced suddenly to stop ; he would be unable to get his breath, would be incapable of passing a corner-stone, or a tree, or a lamp-post, though it differed in no way from other lamp-posts. With bared teeth, and head turned sideways, he would fight against the invisible thing that was issuing orders he could not perform.

He would go quickly into the nearest shop, sit down, study the faces of the customers, chat with the saleswoman and ask her to send him six specially stiff toothbrushes to the villa. The unoccupied rooms, where the antiques and pictures for the mansion were stored, contained a large stock of the most varied articles, which he had collected in this way during the past year.

Like many other people, Jürgen could not bear to have someone walk behind him in the street. Even in broad daylight he had to stop, examine with interest the façade of a house, or slip quickly into a shop.

It was a long time since Jürgen had dared to go for a walk outside the town, where he could not count on meeting other people. Someone would be walking behind him. Jürgen would turn round, turn again, and so describe a complete circle. Someone was always standing behind

him. And since he could not take refuge in a shop, he would throw himself on the ground.

Once Adolf Sinsheimer had saved him from his pursuer. He was standing with bared teeth in the deserted countryside, struggling against the impossible commands of his invisible mentor, when he noticed his old school-friend leaning against a tree, a notebook full of calculations in his hand, looking, deeply sunk in thought, at a far-off chain of hills, as though he were sketching or writing a poem. At that time the button business had been on the verge of bankruptcy.

Jürgen approached Adolf with panic-stricken leaps. As he looked up, startled, Jürgen implored him : " Sell me your pencil."

" Why sell it ? . . . Here, take it ! " And he tried to press the patent gold pencil into Jürgen's hand.

" Impossible ! Quite impossible ! " He forced Adolf to accept a banknote, and, with a sigh of relief, thrust the pencil into his pocket.

The tram stopped. The driver unscrewed his lever. " Terminus ! " The conductor said the word twice to Jürgen, who, with contorted face, was talking over his shoulder and could not leave the tram.

Young clerks, hurrying through the corridors, bowed to their director. He imitated the voice of his family doctor. " In the evening a few soft-boiled eggs. The whites just set. And it wouldn't hurt you to take a little bromide three times a day."

The bromide glass was standing on his writing-desk. Whenever Jürgen dipped his pen in the ink he saw the glass. It seemed to grow on the shoulders of the married clerk, who sat with bent head on a stool in front of Jürgen, as still as though he were asleep. He was now the father of three children ; there were lines

of care in his grey face, and he never wore violets in his buttonhole.

A new storey was being added to the bank, but the alterations were not allowed to interrupt the normal course of business. While they were taking place Jürgen had to work in the same room with three clerks. The hammering, shouting, filing, sawing, planing, was all round him. It was far away and near at hand, on the roof and on every floor.

But in the office itself there was peace, removed from all catastrophe.

Jürgen dipped his pen in the ink. But when he came to write, a tiny, living man was standing on his desk in place of the inkpot. The little man bowed courteously, smiled and pointed to the bromide glass with its tiny, delicately formed forefinger.

Jürgen could not get his breath. He bared his teeth, dipped his pen once more in the ink, stabbing it down on the little man's head, so that it shrank and changed into the inkpot again. But when Jürgen tried to write, it was back again, alive and bowing politely. Its tiny finger pointed, its tiny mouth smiled, and said :

"A human soul cannot be silenced with bromide. I assure you it is perfectly true that ninety-nine per cent. of our contemporaries who talk so much about their souls are not in any way disturbed by their souls, because they exchanged them long ago for things that have a marketable value——"

That's true, thought Jürgen. That's true.

"—and it's equally true that, with certain persons, the soul can slip with the utmost ease through the strongest protective walls, and demand its pre-ordained rights."

The little man put its tiny hand to its lips, as though it had a profound secret to reveal.

"The soul wishes to flow. Under certain circumstances and with certain people, it insists on flowing, even at the risk of overflowing and setting everything in confusion. Just think of the many, many madhouses that exist in the world. Full! Packed! If you can pay, you go in the first class and have your soul treated for a corresponding fee. . . . Well, the price is of minor importance, though nowadays it comes first in everything. But excuse the digression."

Jürgen passed his hand across his eyes, and looked out of the window. "Digression? That was a delusion. No, it was merely an hallucination. It was not even that; I've simply been eating too much, as the doctor said. Or I'm overtired. It's all nerves. These structural alterations are enough to drive a man off his head."

He squinted down at the inkpot. It stood in its place, black, broad, squat and lifeless. And yet he heard a voice: "When a soul overflows and speaks, the doctors call it an hallucination."

"It's about time I had myself examined by a nerve specialist."

"That won't help you," said the little man, shrugging its shoulders. It was sitting on the blotter with crossed legs, and looked as if it meant to stay for some time.

The married clerk changed his sleeve-protectors, so that as the years went by they would wear equally. Experience had taught him wisdom. As a young man, he had once had to wear a black sleeve-protector and a green one because he had omitted to change them occasionally, and the right sleeve-protector had worn out before the left. This was not likely to happen to him again.

The two young clerks, still fresh and shining, who sat at the same desk in front of Jürgen, kicked each other

to draw attention to the pedantic carefulness of their senior colleague.

Jürgen gave instructions for the day's Stock Exchange transactions to his general manager, a plump man whose lips always looked as though he had just been eating something fatty.

"Did it just say: You stand at the birth of your ego? Or did I say it myself?" Jürgen could not decide whether it was he that was speaking.

"I, of course, I am speaking. It was I who said: You stand at the birth of your ego."

"But that phrase is mine. It was I who formulated that idea in those very terms years ago."

"I don't quite understand," said the general manager.

Three backs were bending over their work, and two eyes, staring fixedly, saw the back of the married clerk's neck, the bromide glass and the inkpot, and saw them all double. "There's something happening at the back of my head—not in the front."

"I am what is happening."

"And what's to become of me?"

"You don't exist any more."

His forehead crashed down on the writing-table. The walls of the office bent noiselessly over him. He saw objects multiply and merge into each other, felt sick, felt all the blood draining out of his body.

The head clerk sprang towards him, a glass of water in his fat hand, and lifted the helpless Jürgen.

"Buy! Buy!"

"Certainly. I'll see to it! There's no need for anxiety. . . . Here, a sip of water."

"No, anything! For me! Buy—anything. . . . Some oranges. Whatever you like."

The general manager hurried to the door. Jürgen's

lips were white. In the back of his head the rubber hammer was beating darkly. "As quickly as possible," he shouted with bared teeth after the general manager.

"That won't help you now."

"That voice sounds as though someone were speaking quite close to me, and yet far, far away. It sounds like a trunk call on the telephone. It's as though I were speaking with someone whom I once loved unhappily. . . . Please," said Jürgen, trembling with fear lest his request should be granted, and speaking so loudly that the clerks looked up, "please put off your disguise."

Then he could see objects no longer; he could see no eyes, but he saw a look that no eyes had sent forth. Only the look itself, which suddenly changed to the grave look in the photograph of his youthful self on the season ticket. It withdrew to a great distance and vanished.

Hot through and through, gasping for breath, he stared after that grave, moving look; stared with teeth exposed and head turned sideways, and, as it vanished, the look transformed itself into the little man, which rose so quickly to its feet that it moved the blotter.

"That was my first official visit." It looked at the office clock. "Five minutes to twelve." (The married clerk was taking off his sleeve-protectors.) "Of men like you there are in the world at this moment——" the little man mentioned a number that was at once immensely great and minutely small, and sounded like an accusing word, uttered in the silence of the night.

"They are to be found in all classes and in all camps. I visit them all. Each at his own time. Among them are professors, who, as students, carried in their eyes the proof that they were willing to sacrifice themselves; industrialists who wrote poems when they were young; high dignitaries of the Church, who have strayed to the

false Christianity; writers who have forsaken their belief, their protest, for the sake of success and fame, who have pursued fame and success, and sunk deeper and deeper to the level of their public; men who gave themselves to science and later made a trade of it, exploited it for a name, complete with title, affixed to their doors; and men like you, who were Socialists and turned bourgeois. All infamous! For Nature gave them the power to force their way through the tangled, blood-stained, hypocritical thicket of our century to the consciousness that a new human community must be founded. This community must stand beneath the banner of liberated labour; it must allow the soul to win its ego through the body, and rest in harmony with itself. For this community *must* be founded, if the living and future generations are to be saved from war and the barbarism of hunger, from madness and the great death!"

I must make a note of all that, or I shall forget it. "Impossible! Impossible!" he cried, without raising his eyes from his writing-pad, and he stretched out his left hand as though to defend himself from the general manager, who was holding a bundle of papers in his hands. The general manager licked his lips in astonishment, walked backwards on tiptoe and left the room.

"Each at his own time. Now I am an autumn day, now a withered leaf that falls from a tree and suddenly calls forth in the mind of a poet, barren with fame, the question: Have I betrayed all that was dear to me in my youth? A question which is at the same time its own answer and proof. Sometimes I walk into a book, become a sentence, which in a flash liberates the conscience of the reader. Sometimes I am a dream. (As, for instance, in your case.) I can even be the reconstruction of a bank."

Or a Colonial who asks what has happened to your brother, thought Jürgen, and made a shorthand note of this reminiscence.

"I am a girl of twenty in conflict with her environment, whose contempt brings to a renegade the moment when he must take a tragic glance backward. Sometimes I become a questioning conscience through a mere noise in an hour of empty, grey monotony—through the sound of a child's trumpet. I am a rainy day that prevents an excursion in search of pleasure, and so causes a man to sink into self-disgust. I am often a Sunday afternoon. I become a questioning conscience through a picture on a wall, or a walk through a deserted landscape, where there are no shops. I rise, as the intoxication of wine, into the heart of the satiate, and he falls into self-recognition. A man may look at his carpet and suddenly read in the pattern, with shuddering clearness, the question of his conscience; I am the pattern. Sometimes the backward glance produces a conflict that leads to the madhouse."

The little man pointed: "That is your case."

Jürgen shuddered to his very marrow.

"Others think to save themselves in self-righteousness. Many are completely submerged in it, and suffer no penalty until old age is upon them; then one day, impelled by me, they have to recognise the pettiness of their life, and, horrified at their foul existence, with its veneer of respect, meanness, lies, success, fame and self-righteousness, they die of a bullet, a noose or sheer self-disgust. Even the finest self-deception cannot protect a traitor. No one can end his life in self-righteousness, except those who were robbed, as defenceless children, of their self, their ego, their soul; who adapted themselves to their environment and exchanged for all this—life as it is. They stand in contrast to you who had the power to fight and win the

most precious and painful thing on earth : the consciousness of reality."

"Who is to decide whether the power within me to continue the fight was greater than circumstance and my own desires ? What is the proof of my treachery ? "

"The man who asks: Am I a traitor?—is a traitor. Such a question never presents itself to your father-in-law. The question contains the answer and is itself a proof of treachery."

These words struck him with such conviction that for some minutes he lost all power of thought. The beating in the back of his head had ceased.

The office clock struck twelve. The three clerks sat up. Three pens were laid down.

Jürgen also put down his pen and sat up. Little stars, white as lightning and edged with gold, floated in circles or crowded together before his eyes, as though he had been hanging with his head downward. A fly glided quickly from the inkpot, across a sheet of white paper, to the blotter.

"I wonder how many legs a fly has ? Four or six ? . . . I've reached the age of forty-two, and I don't know how many legs a fly has. What a fool I am ! I've been sitting here for hours, brooding over all that nonsense. What on earth does it matter to me ? " he said, and listened with relief to the increasing noises of the street, as the crowds hurried home to their soup-plates. The bells of the tram-cars sounded louder.

"No need to do it to-morrow, but when you get a chance, you ought to have your photograph taken again. You've changed so much," said the conductor, good-naturedly, and handed back the season-ticket to Jürgen. "This is quite a lad, while you're just entering the prime of life."

A respectable, grey-haired man sitting next to Jürgen rolled up his ticket and pushed it under his wedding-ring.

Yes, thank God, that's still before me. . . . I'd better have my photograph taken again one of these days, he thought, and got out. He walked, at his usual pace, the two hundred steps to the villa. Hummed as he walked through the garden towards the coloured glass balls.

He stopped for a fraction of a second in front of the glass balls. The day was grey. The glass balls looked dreary in their own colours; nothing moved in the garden.

His coat hung itself on the peg. His slippers, standing ready, slipped on to his feet. He twitched a crease out of the table-cloth, as was his wont. The dishes emptied themselves.

The sofa gave to his body with a familiar creak. His eyes read the midday paper.

In the office till six. Then in the garden. Soft-boiled eggs for dinner. The evening paper from nine till ten. To bed at ten sharp, as the doctor ordered. During the long Sunday afternoon, his usual game of billiards, played with the friendly capitalist who owned the collection of Gothic wood-carvings. On Monday, back to the office.

Some time passed like this, till one day the evening paper was missing. Punctually at nine the creak of the sofa combined with Jürgen's comfortable "Ah!" His hand went out automatically for the evening paper, which for years had always lain ready at the same spot on the table; it went out into vacancy.

A gap appeared in time and did not close till he called to Phinchen: "Where's the evening paper?"

"The paper-woman didn't come to-day."

"Oh, the paper-woman didn't come? The paper wasn't delivered, what? You didn't hear anything?"

"No, it wasn't delivered. Probably the paper-woman went by and forgot to leave it."

"Oh, you think*the paper-woman forgot to leave it?"

"She must have forgotten to put it through the letter-box. Passed the house." As he said the word "house," he tapped lightly on his lips with his fingers to cover a yawn, so that the word was broken up into several parts. The sound reminded him of that of a stationary tram when the engine has been thrown out of gear. (The conductor gave him back his season-ticket.)

Good. I shall have my photograph taken one of these days. . . . It's not a bad idea to roll up your ticket and stick it under your wedding-ring. It's handy, if the inspector comes. His hand went out for the evening paper. ". . . Oh yes."

He tried to fill up the gap that had appeared in time by crossing his left leg over his right and beginning to hum in a cheerful tone. But as soon as he stopped, the gap was there again. Large, black, infinite.

The green hillside, where, fourteen years ago, the sons and daughters of local manufacturers had eaten chicken and drunk red wine, intruded into the gap and vanished again. He thought: I wonder what's happening all over the world just now, between nine and ten. . . . A great deal, no doubt.

He crossed his right leg over his left, leaned his head first against the hard back of the sofa and then against the soft cushion. ("A man looks at his carpet . . . I am the pattern . . .") He turned over on the sofa. The spring creaked. He began to whistle.

Suddenly, the thought of lying there whistling for a whole hour filled him with such horror that he stared at the ceiling as though turned to stone, his lips still pursed in a silent whistle.

"If only she'd brought the paper, I should have known what to do with myself. Known what to do. . . . I used to be able to dine out, go to the music-hall, the circus, the theatre, the opera. Others go to the same restaurant night after night, to choral rehearsals, skittle-alleys and card-parties. . . . That's one way of passing the time. The whole of Europe is amusing itself." He began to whistle again.

"But others whose defenceless children—— You know you're alive, at any rate, when you're playing skittles."

Then his pursed lips parted. Jürgen seemed to feel and see a number of black letters rise up behind his forehead, and form the question: "Who said that?"

He sat up abruptly and shouted into the deathly stillness of the room: "Who said that? Who?"

A blackbird gave a sharp cry and fluttered out of the ivy by the window. "Who? The blackbird? Who said it?"

One of the flies that were crawling round on the ceiling fell on to the table. And Jürgen whispered, as he bent forward intently, his hand half closed to catch it: "I shall have to——" The captive fly pressed itself against the palm of his hand.

His interest in discovering how many legs it had passed more quickly than a fly's passage before his face, giving way to this question: What can save me now?

"Nothing can save you now. You will go mad."

He let himself sink slowly back on to the sofa: "Mad? Why?" Immediately he started up again to a sitting posture. "What? Who said I should go mad? Who? I didn't say it. Who did say it? Who? Who?" Of a sudden he bellowed wildly: "The evening paper! I want the evening paper. Everyone has an evening paper. The evening paper! The evening paper!" His face was contorted with rage.

"Even the paper wouldn't help you now."

Punctual to the minute, Phinchen came in to perform her daily duty of pulling up the weights of the grandfather clock. The two leaden weights now touched the edge of the clock-face.

"Then it must be just half-past nine," said Jürgen, when Phinchen had gone. "No need to look. Just half-past nine. . . . And to-morrow evening at half-past nine the clock will have run down and the weights will be hanging at full length. Then a day will have passed. The weights will be drawn up, and the day after to-morrow at half-past nine they will be hanging down again. Then another day will have passed. They'll be drawn up—drawn up——"

"And then life will have passed."

"Yes, then life will have passed. And yet to-morrow I shall go to the office, and the day after to-morrow. And then Sunday will come. And then Monday. Saturday. I shall work, make plans. The merger. Grow richer and richer. The years will pass. . . ."

And then arose the question: What is the sense and the purpose, what is the idea, what the aim, for which I work and struggle until life has room for nothing else?

His mind and the world outside him—all was grey and empty. He waited for a long while.

"But I'm highly respected."

"Once you said that was the greatest catastrophe that could happen to a man."

"Maybe. Childishness. Let's leave that for the moment. Now I'm going to draw up my account. After that I shall consider what's to be done. I must be methodical. I'm rich, very rich, respected, better educated, better informed, more cultivated than most

people, and I'm in a position to obtain every pleasure that life can offer."

"Then you have already attained the state that is the goal of others from early youth, and that becomes their coffin as soon as they reach it. What is your object now? What is your aim now?"

"But I'm not greedy nor callous. On the contrary, one-tenth of what I've given to charity would keep half a dozen men with wives and children, would enable them to live in their own houses free from anxiety, and even to practise charity themselves on a smaller scale."

"That is true. And probably that is the reason, or partly the reason, why you are held in such high esteem by others and yourself."

"That may be true. But questions of esteem are, as we have said, secondary."

"No, they are primary."

Jürgen made an angry, defensive movement with his hand. "Well, if you like, I don't care a damn for the respect of others. If I went on the way I am going, I could grow more powerful, more influential, and more respected by more and more people."

"Only the mentally blind can do that, the men whose philosophy consists of three words: Each for himself. But you cannot do it. For your mind tells you that you could not contribute one iota towards the realisation of the immutable aim of humanity, though you went down the path of 'Each for himself' till you became the mightiest in the land."

"But I don't want to go on down this meaningless path."

"Not, *you* do not want, but *I* do not want. I! I won't allow you to go on at the same jog-trot as hitherto. Of yourself you can neither desire a thing nor not desire it. You are only the mask of a will."

Jürgen pressed both fists to his head. For some time now I've fallen into the habit of talking to myself. Well, and what if I do? Lots of people talk to themselves.

"Yes, but you talk with your Self."

Jürgen looked up. "However that may be, it is a fact that I can't go on living without aim, without object, without purpose. I can't stand it. I simply can't stand it any longer."

"It is that that marks you out from the perfect bourgeois. He can stand it very well. For his aim is this: Get, get, get, and keep on getting. And generally it doesn't affect his health. The only question is whether his health is not the disease humanity is dying from."

"To my mind it is unquestionable that humanity is dying of this health. . . . I have just," whispered Jürgen, "expressed an idea which is undoubtedly true. . . . But how can one explain the fact that, despite this deadly health, no one is able to live without an ideal? Everyone that I know, without exception, even the foulest, greediest, most callous scoundrel, has his ideal, though it be nothing better than self-deception. A means of soothing his conscience."

First Jürgen screwed up his eyes and threw a suspicious glance sideways, as though trying to assure himself that he was not being observed. Then he slowly got up. His hand, as it rested on the table, became a clenched fist. A furrow of energy appeared on his brow. He sat there without moving, every muscle tense, filled suddenly and completely with the resolve to begin writing his life-work, the book he had planned long since: *Economics and the Individual Soul*. "That is my salvation." His face flushed with joy.

And as he raised his head he saw, on the opposite wall, a tiny, mocking smile.

His head dropped immediately. With this book I shall serve, in my small way, the knowledge and progress of humanity, he thought, and squinted over at the wall, where the mocking smile was hanging like a picture.

"I should like to say that I refuse to accept your clever, grandiloquent twaddle about morals, justice, humanity, ideals and the soul, in their relation to economics. While you are writing, I shall have to point out continually, with unequalled stubbornness, that you are talking only of the morals and justice of the ruling class, the people who profit by the existing system of production and distribution; for it is this system and its murderous effects that decide the development and life, the sickness and death of the individual soul."

Jürgen's eyes stared round him in search of help. Suddenly limp, he dropped into the corner of the sofa. "Is there nothing to which I can surrender and devote myself? That is what I long for so deeply."

"Your longing arises from a conflict that will drive you into the madhouse."

"I want—I want to get back to myself. . . . I feel, I feel——"

"You think all your feelings. You can go neither forward nor backward."

"A dead centre? I can't stand that. I shall go mad!"

"Mad! You are on the verge of it."

"Hemmed in?"

"Hemmed in! You cannot go on being what you have been for the last fourteen years. It is too late to become what you used to be, a struggler, a fighter. You don't exist any more. You are not yourself any more."

"That's what the tram-conductor said."

"I spoke out of his mouth."

"Are you also the evening paper that wasn't delivered?"

"I am the absence of the evening paper, and I spoke out of the mouth of the tram-conductor. A so-called normal bourgeois would understand, when the conductor said 'That's not you any longer,' simply that his beard had grown longer and greyer."

"If you are I, and spoke out of the mouth of the tram-conductor, then it was actually I, myself, who spoke from the mouth of the tram-conductor, and at the same time I, who, as a passenger, heard his words. His? Your? Or mine? I don't know. I'm quite confused."

"You heard your own words spoken by the tram-conductor, from whose mouth I spoke."

A sudden apprehension caused Jürgen to rise from the sofa. "Who is thinking all this? I want to know who's thinking it?"

"Your mind."

"Who is it speaking to me all the time? I hear voices."

"Madmen hear voices."

"But I'm not mad! I'm not mad! I'm the banker, Jürgen Kolbenreier. All I need is to stop going to the office, and take up the threads where I broke them off, fourteen years ago; then I shall struggle on unselfishly, and all will be well."

"That wish also arises from the conflict that will drive you to the madhouse."

"Seek and ye shall find—it says that in the Bible." Jürgen listened, his face turned sideways. A burst of laughter sounded from the next garden.

"I must make an end. Finish it at once and begin afresh. On the spot! Above all, I won't go to the bank again. That's done with!"

He had sprung to his feet; he listened inwards for what the stream of feeling might bring him first.

Typewriters clattering. The mahogany lift shot silently upward. Clerks were hurrying through the corridors of the bank. The general manager bowed and gave Jürgen some important telegrams.

Repelled by the strange smell of the bank, he pushed all his business away from him and waited for the stream of feeling. The wife of his friend, the manufacturer, came in. She was a pretty young blonde, who had been seduced by Jürgen one night when she came to see him in the villa. She took off her veil as she had done on that occasion. And again he received an impression as though she were undressing. Jürgen shook his head as if to ward off the idea.

The green billiard-table appeared before him. He was faced with a difficult stroke. He performed it successfully. He had won the match. His friend had to pay.

Jürgen smiled with bent head. "That was an interesting game," he whispered, very pleased, and showed his friend how to do a number of the most difficult strokes.

The billiard balls grew larger, grew as large as a man's head, changed into the coloured glass balls. He recognised the red ball as the severed head of himself as a student. It was smiling; it was not a billiard-ball but a dangerous smile the size of a man's head that went bouncing over the green cloth. Jürgen dropped his cue.

In profound dismay, he prayed for some feeling out of his past life. Still he felt nothing. He sank into a chair, broken and defeated. I shall just go to the office tomorrow and the day after, and in twenty years' time . . . "Impossible!" he cried. "Impossible!"

Then a wave of anger surged up within him. He shouted violent words to fill that inward vacancy: "Nailed to a bloody cross! Workers of the world——! Advance! Ruin!" Even while he was shouting he felt nothing.

He yelled whatever came into his head : " Infants' school ! Apple-knave ! Hoop-iron ! "

" What ? Apple-knave ? Well, why not apple-knave ? All right : Apple-knave ! Apple-knave ! Apple-knave ! "

Distorted with rage, he rushed through the rooms till he came to the drawing-room. The pendulum was swinging to and fro between the black-lacquered, unused coal-box, with a painting of the Holy Family on the flight to Egypt, and the embroidered stork on a screen, fishing from a pond three infants wrapped in a cloth.

The excess of his fury had calmed him ; he went to the clock, wrenched out the pendulum with one jerk, and hurled it through the window into the fountain-basin. The blackbird flitted from the garden. " That's that ! " he exulted, and raising a tall vase over his head, dashed it on the floor. The knick-knacks flew against the walls. The windows splintered. He demolished the furniture. He dragged the heavy oak cabinet from the wall and contemplated the scene of destruction. " Well, well," he said helplessly, and pushed the cabinet back against the wall.

Sobs shook him. He felt himself inwardly moved and, obeying his impulse, went up to the little room he had occupied as a child and adolescent. In his hand he held the silver candlestick his aunt had given him when he left school. He remembered that she had said : " When I'm dead you'll have everything." Shyly he entered the room ; no one had been there for many a year.

The faded photographs of the Kolbenreih family were still hanging in their oval frames, arranged symmetrically in a larger oval above the worn leather sofa. And in the bookcase were the dusty travel-stories in pictorial bindings. The air was musty, as in a death-room.

Deeply moved by this visit to his own youth, he stood

there, a tall man, who had latterly grown stout, and looked with bated breath at the faded walls and his own gigantic shadow. As though walking in his sleep, he began to behave like a boy; he quivered with suppressed tears as he took the books from the shelves and put them back in their places. Then, with his finger to his pursed lips, he stole over to the sofa, taking with him *A Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. A smile of crazy cunning crossed his face, as he got up again, made a mark round the candle with his pen-knife, an inch below the wick, and began to read.

"No, no; oh no; that't won't help you."

Jürgen looked up. The voice had sounded so sad and compassionate. "That won't help me," he whispered, crying. "That won't help me."

Before him lay a strange, wide landscape, divided by a mighty ravine. On the right was a smooth stretch of asphalt, and, in the middle of this, a yellow match-box. All Jürgen's schoolfellows, his business friends and acquaintances, went up to the yellow match-box, which contained a bank-note. On the match-box was the word Respectability. They came from all directions and bowed to the match-box, jostled each other, bowed.

On the other side of the ravine was a peaceful meadow, where an old horse was grazing quietly. Further away, the meadow grew wilder, and where it met the sky were youth, enthusiasm, ideals, faces shining with fiery light: young people whose lives were devoted to an attempt to get the horse, which was love, across the great ravine to the middle-class men on the further side.

"They don't notice what's going on. And, for that odd reason, the youths find it quite impossible to get the horse across the ravine," said Jürgen.

Then his hands were compelled to empty a match-box

and put a bank-note inside it. He placed the match-box on the floor and bowed to it. His fists on a level with his chest, he trotted in a monotonous dance round the match-box. The house shook. Jürgen panted and sweated, bowed, and went on running round in a circle.

The clock struck ten. The power of habit put an immediate end to his dance. "Time to go to bed," he said, panting and yawning simultaneously, his face drawn and contorted. He put out his hand for the candlestick.

He stood at the door, as though he had just entered the room. His head was clear. "I must have this place thoroughly ventilated," he said, and went to his bedroom.

Punctually at eight next morning he entered his office.

When he had covered half a sheet of foolscap with writing, he stopped in the middle of a word. "I didn't want to come to the office to-day. . . . But is it possible to stay away? Can I stand it? Or can't I stand it?"

"Neither the one nor the other!"

The three clerks sprang from their seats at the sound of a sudden crash: Jürgen had thrown the inkpot through the window-pane into the courtyard. A drop of ink rolled slowly down his forehead, past one insanely staring eye, over his plump cheek.

"If you do things like that, they'll put a strait-waistcoat on you. But you, yourself, are a strait-waistcoat for your real self. So you would have a strait-waistcoat put over a strait-waistcoat. Just think how terribly helpless you would be." The voice had sounded reproachful and yet gentle.

"Yes. Then the best thing I can do is go," said Jürgen, and took his hat. The two young clerks did not turn their heads, but called each other's attention to his departure with their feet.

An alien power, marching behind his back, drove Jürgen through the streets to a nerve specialist's.

The neurologist sat with crossed legs, both elbows on the arms of his chair, so that his chin and his folded hands met on his breast. He listened to his patient in silence. And Jürgen felt a sense of gratitude towards him, because he seemed to know everything already, and yet to be willing to listen.

"Well," said the specialist, interrupting Jürgen's remarks with a reassuring smile; and he bent quickly forward and took his wrist. With a soothing snap the lid of his gold chronometer sprang open, revealing the dial. His professional eyes looked at the ceiling.

The little man was sitting, a black figure, on the black marble inkpot, shaking its little head pityingly.

"And now your tongue!" Jürgen put out his tongue.

"You are full-blooded, and in spite of that—I tell you straight to your face—you've been eating soup, meat and eggs every day. Is that true?"

"My family doctor advised me to eat soft-boiled eggs."

The specialist ignored him. "So much for your physical condition. And as for your mental condition, of which, as you told me, you think you have lost control, I must tell you that, regarded from a strictly scientific standpoint, there is no such thing as a mental condition in the sense in which you use the word, for the simple reason that—speaking, you understand, scientifically—there is, in your meaning of the word, no such thing as a mind."

He looked encouragingly at Jürgen, as though to say: You see, the matter is quite simple when we look at it scientifically.

"There are only bodies, Herr Kolbenreiherr, bodies, beginning with the most highly developed animal, endowed with reason and consciousness—that is to say, man—and

going back through the ape, the horse, the ass, the dog, the worm, the snake, the louse (if you'll pardon my mentioning it), the plant, and finally lifeless objects which, like plants, animals and men, consist of atoms. That is the cosmos, built up by science and illuminated to its uttermost corner, so that it is now as clear as glass. In that cosmos there is no room for the mediæval conception, mind, in the sense in which you use the word."

Jürgen threw a rapid glance in the direction of the ink-pot, to find it standing, black and shining, in its place.

"You, Herr Kolbenreiherr, are an intelligent patient; with others I should not attempt to give these explanations. To repeat: there are, firstly, conglomerations of atoms without reason, and, secondly, conglomerations of atoms with reason, and of the latter the most highly developed conglomeration is man. Accordingly, we have nothing to do with the division into body and soul, as your little man maintains——"

"I have never maintained it in that form," said the little man.

"—but with the unity body, which is moved by reason, acting from its centre, the brain. You, Herr Kolbenreiherr, are a conglomeration of atoms endowed with reason—make a note of that!—and a unity. That is to say, your reason, your consciousness, your ego, cannot, as you've just been telling me, speak or go for a walk—I mean a separate walk—apart from you, or pay you a visit. It cannot, let us say, have a banking account, though, by virtue of your reason, you have a banking account."

"But I've lost control of my mind."

The doctor rose to his feet. "We'll soon put that right. You are a banker. A useful member of society. With your ability you serve the general good. That ought to strengthen your self-respect. I admit you are full-

blooded. So no meat-soups, no egg dishes. A cold shower before going to bed, and, as your own doctor says, a little bromide. . . . Orderliness. Work. Now and then a little recreation, a pretty woman. You understand? That is life. You should be glad that there is no such thing as that dark calamity, mind or soul, in your sense of the word."

The little man in the frock-coat got up with the doctor.

"There! Look! There it is!" Jürgen recoiled and pointed to the inkpot.

The specialist took it in his hand. "What is it?"

"Oh, nothing of importance. It is only I. A trifle. Only one letter—I. Not worth talking about," said the little man, with a modest smile.

And the doctor: "Well, what is it?"

"It's an inkpot."

"There, you see. Now you can't help smiling."

Jürgen still wore the grimace of a smile as he walked through the streets.

"Believe me, he can't help you."

None the less, Jürgen went at once to a psychiatrist, and told him everything. Even everything that the specialist had said. "But his whole point of view——"

"You're right. In the light of modern mental science, the point of view of my colleague is a little primitive. . . . Yes, Herr Kolbenreihner, the treatment will probably take some years. We must investigate your whole childhood. Not until the grave impressions of your childhood, which you have completely forgotten——"

The little man in the black coat waved its hand: "Oh, stop it, doctor."

"I beg your pardon."

"I didn't say anything."

"—and which are undoubtedly the cause of your trouble,

are fully restored to your consciousness, and you can regard them with the critical mind of a man of forty-two——”

“ But, doctor, let me give you just one instance : if a man could dream that he laughed in his father’s face, if a man could conquer the alien powers in his soul, could win through to a deeper consciousness and reach the birth of his ego, he cannot put the responsibility on to the wounds received in his childhood and youth.”

“ Oh,” said the psychiatrist, with a delicate smile, “ don’t say that.”

“ What ? ” asked Jürgen.

“ What you just said.”

“ I said nothing.”

The little man smiled.

Jürgen also smiled cunningly. “ Well, we seem to agree at any rate about the experiences of childhood.”

“ Then that’s all right. Come and see me to-morrow.”

“ No. You can’t help me either.”

“ As I told you, you shouldn’t be in a hurry to say that.”

“ What ? ”

“ That I can’t—— These memories of child——”

“ A fad.”

The psychiatrist raised his brows and made a note of the word “ fad.”

“ ——childhood, especially of course those of a sexual nature——”

“ Let’s go ! ” said the little man in a brotherly tone, speaking through Jürgen’s mouth. “ Good-day, doctor.”

The boys were shouting as they burst out of the high school, the same school that Jürgen had attended for nine years. Questioning young eyes. Flaming faces. Flexible young bodies, books under their arms, stretching forward towards life.

“ So I must go to the photographer’s at once.” Why

the sight of the schoolboys should cause him to go to the photographer Jürgen could not have said. Suddenly he was aware of a man bowing low before him, and followed the photographer's inviting hand.

As he sat in front of the lens, he looked at the life-sized heads, and their dead eyes looked back at him. "Could one enlarge this old photograph of mine?"

The photographer examined a faded photograph of Jürgen, which represented him in the garden, leaning against the nut tree, beneath which his aunt had used to do her crochet-work. "With pleasure. It'll come out very well."

"Not just head and shoulders. Life-size. With the legs."

"I must say, no one's asked me to do that before. But there's no difficulty about it. . . . Oh! it often happens that my clients have themselves enlarged. And it's always the old photographs of years ago that they want. Only a few weeks since Privy Councillor Lenz—a very famous man, as you know—came and ordered an enlargement of a photograph of himself. Taken twenty years ago. You'd never have recognised him. Nobody would believe that Privy Councillor Lenz could ever have looked like that. . . . This is his son, the Public Prosecutor, Herr Carl Lenz. Measured by the Greek ideal of beauty, he's got too fat. . . . It's amusing to see what one used to look like, isn't it? But these enlargements of old photographs look rather faded, effaced, done with, so to speak. They have what you might call the beauty of a dream. Beauty of a dream—that's just the phrase. . . . Raise your head a little, please. . . ."

Before he went to bed, Jürgen took bromide and douched himself with cold water. He slept firmly, but dreamed heavily. In the morning he could not remember what he

had dreamt, and arrived punctually at the office. The clerks could not take their eyes off him.

On the way back to the tram, Jürgen stopped, tapped the handle of his walking-stick against the chest of a companion who was not there, and explained: "That isn't quite the position. Listen carefully to me." He walked on, talking, his head turned to one side. His hands gesticulated. He stopped. Laughed. "That was a joke." "And a very good joke," said his companion. "Not so bad," Jürgen admitted and walked on. "You know, I was talking recently with Katharina——"

"What have I just said?" he asked himself, horrified, and drew back his head. He fell silent.

But when he had taken ten paces he started a fresh conversation. His partner might be a stranger with whom he had spoken shortly before at the bank, a child that had looked after him, his aunt, now long since dust. At first, the student Jürgen appeared only for a few seconds to accompany the Jürgen of forty-two. As soon as he saw him, Jürgen supplied him with a beard, put spectacles on his nose, dressed him in a fur coat, so that he could go on talking to a stranger. But later the student successfully overcame these efforts to disguise him; he dropped the coat, spectacles and beard, changed with the rapidity of thought back into a student, and remarked in a calm voice to the man of forty-two: "You are scoundrelly and treacherous; and you are nothing."

"Pardon me, why am I nothing?"

The student wore a pair of cut-down trousers, to which a fresh seat had been sewn in the style of a pair of breeches. He proved conclusively why Jürgen was nothing, delivered a flaming speech, grew ardent. Jürgen listened entranced, and tried to speak in the same strain, of devotion, conflict and the aims of life.

"Stop! I say that. I say that. You've no right to speak like that. You have lost whatever right you had."

At that, Jürgen immediately grew a beard on the student's face. But as he entered the living-room, he caught sight of the student, as large as life, leaning against the wall. A little vague, distant and effaced. And terrifically present.

"That's splendid," cried Jürgen heartily. He placed his walking-stick in the corner, and himself in front of the photograph. "I like you. . . . Come, come, why are you so serious? Is business bad?"

The photograph did not answer.

"No, no, I beg your pardon. A joke! It shan't happen again." He went to the door, intending to call Phinchen and show her the photograph.

"Don't exist."

"Who doesn't exist?" Jürgen had spun round; he had heard the two words quite clearly, spoken in a loud and toneless voice. He looked out into the garden. There was no one there. He stole back on tiptoe to the photograph and repeated, lost in thought: "Who? Who doesn't exist?" He went to the door to call Phinchen.

"You don't exist."

He let go the door-handle and went close up to the picture, both hands on his hips. "No, you, old man, you don't exist. You're only common bromide of silver and paper. Do you understand?"

"I am here. I am." The photograph pointed with its finger at Jürgen's breast: "But you are not. I'm what there is of you. But I've nothing more in common with you. Therefore you don't exist."

Jürgen lifted the photograph in its narrow frame and placed it with its face to the wall. "And what are you

now, eh? Nothing but cardboard! Common grey cardboard!" He stepped back.

And, quaking with unutterable horror, he saw the portrait appear on the back of the cardboard, and heard the familiar words: "I assure you that more than ninety-nine per cent. of all our contemporaries, who chatter so much about the soul, are in no way disturbed by their souls; but it is equally true that with certain individuals, at certain moments, the soul can slip through a protective wall with the utmost ease and demand its pre-ordained rights." The lips on the photograph had visibly formed the words.

"You swine! You are nothing but cardboard!" shouted Jürgen. He dashed out of the room and dragged Phinchen back to the photograph.

"Turn it round. . . . Who is it?"

"That's you, sir, when you were young." Phinchen's eyes grew moist with emotion.

"That means it's me, isn't it? Me!"

"When you were young."

"Yes, yes; but that means, it's me. Me!"

"Yes, as you used to be."

"Now, tell me, who do you like better, him or me?"

"You, of course, sir. That's only a photograph."

"That's a mistake. I'm he. And he's nothing." Jürgen led Phinchen quickly into the kitchen. "Tell me, Phinchen, did you hear him talking in there? . . . No, don't tell me! I don't want to know."

His rapid steps brought him back to the photograph. "Listen; you are nothing but a photograph and you cost me so and so much. With the frame. . . . Here's the bill."

"You're mistaken. I'm everything you have betrayed, and I cost you your reason,"

"We'll see about that." He went at once to the bathroom, douched himself for some minutes with cold water, swallowed his bromide and got into bed.

The photograph stood in the dark living-room, life-size. Jürgen sat up in bed and glared through six walls at the photograph.

"It has eyes. It looks. . . . Can one take a photograph of a look? I wonder whether the look I had at that time was photographed with me just as it was—photographed with me? . . . And what is behind the look? What is behind a young man's look? Longing, willingness to sacrifice himself, the great emotions—the soul? Was my soul photographed with me?"

Jürgen saw clearly the young look that had been in his eyes, a great question addressed to life.

Without losing sight of that question, he laid his head slowly and gently on the pillow and fell asleep. And in his sleep there was nothing left in the world but his eyes and the two eyes on the photograph. The two pairs of eyes stared at each other for hours, till their silent encounter raised Jürgen out of sleep.

He crept to the living-room, a lighted candle in his hand, and stood before the photograph. "What if I," he said, taking the photograph out of its frame—"what if I put myself in the frame?"

His night-shirt reached to his hairy calves. For a while he stood quite immobile in the frame, staring wild-eyed at the youth that stood opposite him.

That grave look, coming from the far past, forced Jürgen to step out of the frame. Overwhelmed by that youthful and relentless look, he fell on his knees before the photograph. "In you lives the goal, eternal, unalterable."

With the candle in one hand and the photograph in the

other, he climbed up to the little room that he had occupied as a young man, and propped the photograph against the wall. And as he put his hand on the door-handle to go out, a stream of kindness and consideration welled up from among the feelings that had been buried for years. "You can't always stand up. Can't be standing up all your life."

He bent forward the life-sized portrait at the rump so that it formed a right angle, then bent it backward at the knees, and sat the photograph on the sofa.

When he got back to his bedroom, he was wet with tears and sobbing uncontrollably. And as he wailed, groaning and whimpering into his pillow, he shivered with a feeling of hopelessness, because he was cut off for ever from his youth, which was sitting on the sofa in the student's musty room upstairs.

The following day he was on the point of greeting Herr Hommes in the street, when the factory-owner walked past him without a word. Jürgen stopped, his hand on his wildly throbbing heart. "Can't he—can't they see me? Am I invisible? . . . But I'm made of flesh and blood; I have eyes, hands, a forehead." He grasped his wrist, hoping to convince himself, squeezed it.

Then his mouth opened in boundless horror: his hand had become a clenched fist; there was no wrist between his fingers. Once more he took hold of his wrist. Again his fist closed round nothing.

"Don't I exist?" he asked, raising his brows. "Not at all?" He whistled portentously. "So there isn't a Jürgen Kolbenreihier. He's simply gone. Is he air? Or even less than that? Nothing?"

He hastily opened his pocket-knife, stuck the point into his thigh, and was on the point of shouting aloud with joy and triumph at the pain; but felt nothing.

He drove it deeper, twisted the point of the knife in the wound, felt nothing.

At that, his body, bent double with horror, marched home, and laid itself on the sofa.

"What if I got up now and went into the kitchen and Phinchen didn't see me?"

Suddenly the bank messenger was standing in the room, conducted by Phinchen. The manager had sent to ask whether Herr Kolbenreiherr would be coming to the office that day.

"Where? Where is he? You must see him, mustn't you—if you're asking the question? Do you know where Herr Kolbenreiherr is now?"

And when the messenger opened his mouth: "I don't exist, I'm not present, not here, so I can't come to the bank."

"Then I'll report that Herr Kolbenreiherr is away."

"Ah!" cried Jürgen, when the messenger had gone. "Perhaps I'm away. Simply gone away. To Italy. Paris. That'll be it."

Jürgen's face flattened; his eyes protruded. He rushed to the kitchen. "Help me, Phinchen! Advise me! How can I find out where he is? The world is large. What shall I do to find him? . . . Be quick, call the messenger back!"

And when the frightened maid led the messenger back into the room: "Get me a passport. In the name of Jürgen Kolbenreiherr." He winked slyly. "If you're smart, no one will notice that it's not me."

"That's easy enough," said the messenger and went out. Phinchen was crying.

"On the contrary! It's very hard! One could stand losing one's fortune, but no one can stand losing himself."

'The others stand it splendidly; and yet they can't

stand losing their fortunes. And for that simple and extraordinary reason, they find it so easy to endure losing themselves. They don't exist and haven't the faintest notion that they don't exist."

Jürgen slowly raised the palms of both hands to his temples, in order to find out whether his head was there. The palms of his hands met. There was no head between them. He uttered a short cry. And lay until night, still as a corpse. The messenger had brought the passport.

The town was asleep. There was no movement in house or garden. A full moon hung in the sky. Jürgen stole into his study; a few minutes later he went through the garden, and stuck a sheet of foolscap on the gate-post, to which he had once fixed the notice: *Alms given here*. He read it:

"Anyone giving information regarding the whereabouts of Jürgen Kolbenreihier will be rewarded with any desired amount. Enthusiasm, the pure truth, the deeper consciousness and devotion purchased here."

Satisfied, he climbed the stairs and packed his trunk. Then he washed and dressed himself.

Once more he stole into the dark bedroom and went up to a full-length mirror. With his hand on the switch, he waited a few seconds before turning on the light.

The image in the mirror appeared as large as life. Jürgen cried out with joy and raised his left arm.

The image in the mirror did not raise its arm.

And now he became aware that the Jürgen in the mirror was wearing a well-cut dress suit, controlled strength was in his shoulders, chest and bearing, and he was the centre of all eyes. It was the Jürgen he had seen as an ideal to strive after, on the green wooden fence, when he was sitting on a bench in the park.

Jürgen raised his brows, whistled, danced, pulled faces,

clenched his fists. The dress-suited image in the mirror did not stir. A vast horror filled Jürgen.

He switched off the light ; waited for a few breathless seconds ; switched it on, and stared into the mirror.

There was nothing in the mirror. Jürgen's finger pressed the bell.

Phinchen, who had been kneeling in tears outside the bedroom door, entered immediately. He dragged her to the mirror. Could she see him there ?

Wringing her hands, she assured him that he was standing beside her in the mirror. His furious questioning was answered by her piteous pointing finger, till Jürgen, smitten by a last saving thought, said slowly : " If I lie down in bed with you, I shall be bound to feel that I am there. For that, that is the strongest of all feelings."

Phinchen let her arms drop to her sides. She was ready.

" But with whom ? I don't exist. I have no arms to embrace anyone. . . . Do you know, Phinchen, the great thing is for me to get back some trace of feeling ? Feeling ! Then I can look for him. Then I can find him, too. Go, Phinchen, go ! "

He lay till morning, with open eyes, in the dark bedroom.

The neighbouring grocer and an antique dealer, who had a branch shop in the main street of the residential suburb, were the first to see Jürgen's notice. Workmen and women, children on the way to school, milkmen and bakers' boys, began to collect. The antique dealer cracked a joke about his new rival in business. The laughter floated up to Jürgen.

He was having an argument with a stranger, who refused to sell him his feelings, but would only consent to exchange them for other feelings.

" But I haven't any. . . . Listen "—he took the stranger

by the shoulder—"I'll give you all I possess for a little feeling, for a fragment of enthusiasm, the faintest indication of an aim in life. Just a little consciousness! I beg you."

"Can't be done. Feeling for feeling. Devotion for devotion."

Jürgen threw out his hands: "My villa, the three blocks of tenements, all my securities, my power and position, my reputation, I'll give you everything, and I want nothing in return but myself."

A roar of laughter came up from the garden gate. It sounded like the far-off crying of gulls. The antique dealer said jokingly: "Any well-preserved ideals for sale? In the Louis-Seize style."

Jürgen's neighbour came up and read the notice. "There's something wrong here," he said, and pressed the latch of the garden gate.

Jürgen heard the trample of many feet. He took his trunk, rushed down the front staircase and fled from the house.

He took a car to the station, sitting crouched forward, as though he were trying to win a race. "What's the fare to Paris?"

The booking-clerk told him the fare, and put out his hand to the ticket-rack.

"And to Rome? . . . Odessa?"

"Where do you want to go?"

"To myself! . . . Excuse me—it's just possible you may know whether Jürgen Kolbenreier is in Berlin or Vienna?"

"What d'you say?"

"In London or Madrid?"

"What? Who? What d'you want?"

"For God's sake—in New York?"

The booking-clerk stared at him furiously.

And Jürgen said : " You're surprised ? You shouldn't be. You, yourself, cannot know where and what you are, whether in Rome or Chicago, a sailor in a southern seaport or a clerk in an office you have never entered in North Germany. Or are you sitting in a hundred thousand booking-offices at the same time ? You don't know. Come with me ! Here, in this booking-office, you'll never find yourself. Or, do you imagine you are yourself ? . . . Brother, bound to me by fate, come out of your office. For here you will never find yourself, not till the day of your death. Seek yourself. . . . Seek and ye shall find. . . . But I know, you poor people are not even allowed to seek."

Hurrying travellers jostled Jürgen away from the window. The departure of a train was announced. He jumped into a third-class compartment.

He told an old, worn-out, working-class woman, who was sitting opposite him, that he was looking for something that everyone in the world spent his life in seeking. He fell asleep. The muscles of his face worked as though he were having a violent quarrel with someone.

The woman thought Jürgen was shivering. For some time she looked with pitying indecision at his deeply furrowed face. Then she plucked up courage and spread her woollen rug over his knees.

CHAPTER VIII

WEEKS passed and no one knew where he was. When inquisitive neighbours tried to question Phinchen regarding Jürgen's recent peculiarities, she refused to answer them. And Herr Wagner, anxious to prevent the spread of unpleasant rumours, which might have damaged the reputation of the bank, spoke of an important business tour with such caution and brevity that one might have thought a single ill-chosen word would involve the bank in huge losses.

At last a customer reported that he had seen Jürgen in Rome—he specified the day and hour—and two days later had again caught a fleeting glimpse of him in the lounge of the same hotel. He had seen Jürgen run out in a great hurry to a waiting car, as though he were engaged on very urgent business.

Herr Wagner looked wise. And still remained silent, with a faint twinkle in his eyes, when a business friend from Paris smiled quietly and assured him that the report could scarcely be true, for on the intervening day he had talked with Jürgen at his Paris office and cashed a big cheque for him on Wagner and Kolbenreihers Bank. "That was on——"

"Quite right!" interrupted Herr Wagner. "You're both right. There are cases, gentlemen, when business compels us to travel quicker than the swallow."

He lowered his finger. But what if someone else comes along, thought Herr Wagner, and says he saw him in London about the same time? Meanwhile Jürgen was

crouching forward with impatience, as he drove in a cab, under the shadow of a huge red-and-white striped sunshade, from the station of the southern seaport to the hotel where he had stayed on his honeymoon with Elisabeth fourteen years ago.

An under-waiter with a napkin was flicking away the flies from the little white tables with their vases of flowers. Across the road two sunburned men were lying asleep on some broad stone steps in the shadow of a palace.

"Tell me the truth: Is Herr Jürgen Kolbenreier staying here?"

The waiter started, spun round and flapped vigorously with his napkin at a large gadfly. "I'll inquire at once."

The plump head-waiter in a frock-coat remained standing where he was in the cool entrance-hall, a toothpick between his lips. He held out both hands, palm upwards, with a gesture of inquiry and negation towards Jürgen, who was sitting outside in the burning sunshine. Then he pointed with a sudden, vigorous movement towards the lounge, inviting Jürgen to enter.

"He's not been here? . . . Is No. 7 free—the room with a view over the harbour? . . . That's the room he would have taken," he said, as he went up in the lift. He recognised at once the flowery cover on the sofa.

He sat down in an arm-chair. Suddenly he saw Jürgen with Elisabeth in the lounge of a Paris hotel, just as he had seen them when he last sat in that room. That's not me at all. That's someone else. Not the man I'm looking for. . . . If only I could find the man who sat in this room. He also knew that the scoundrel who amused himself in Paris was not Jürgen. But where is he—the man who knew that? Where is he?

"So he's not here? He's not taken this room?"

"This room is free, sir."

"But it wasn't always free. Tell me—now think carefully before you speak—are you sure Herr Jürgen Kolbenreihner has not been here recently? The same Herr Kolbenreihner that spent a few days in this room with his wife, fourteen years ago. A fish! You remember. Her mood never varied. Cool! Cool! Only 'In the night, in the night, when love's flame burneth bright . . .' He paid the bill to you personally in marks; I remember it quite well; he had no other currency."

"A lady with fair hair? Marks? Oh yes, marks! . . . The gentleman left immediately afterwards and he's never been here since."

"Left immediately afterwards?" Jürgen took a cab to the station and boarded the first train that came in. Its destination was Berlin.

Eighteen hours later, he was swept along by the hasty and purposeful passengers, as they streamed through the entrance-hall of the Berlin station, and deposited in the square outside, between shouting paper-boys, rapidly moving cyclists, hooting cars and scurrying pedestrians. He stood there without moving: an axis round which whirled the life of the great flat city.

A policeman was standing at Potsdamer-platz, which is the converging point of a number of busy streets. He held a horn to his lips, and one hand was upraised to direct the traffic.

"Which way, please? Tell me, which way? Which way leads to me?" he asked the policeman.

Who answered: "Don't stand there. Move on!"

"On the contrary! Everything ought to stop. I tell you these people never get an inch nearer their goal as long as they spend their lives rushing like this. While perhaps I—oh, believe me——"

The policeman was still holding up his hand, as though

he were taking an oath on Jürgen's words. His hand dropped: masses of people, obsessed by the present moment, trams, huge, crowded omnibuses, like travelling houses that roared darkly as they moved, resumed the race, hurtled down Leipziger-strasse, sweeping Jürgen with them. He walked down the middle of the street with a smile of inexplicable confidence on his face.

Cars, coming from behind and before, whirled up to him, swerved at the last second, and whirled past with undiminished speed, so close that there was not a hand's breadth to spare. Chauffeurs glared angrily, swore and were gone. Pedestrians watched in amazement.

His smile of confidence vanished. "Invulnerable? Air? Non-existent? The cars pass right through me!" The palms of both his hands flew up to his temples: they found no head there. Grey horror drove him forward.

A crowd of people like a dark, fleeing herd of animals ran down a flight of stairs out of the street, dragging Jürgen with them. Down into the maw of the earth, papered with glaring advertisements, into a curbed but quivering machine.

Squeezed between passengers, whose hurrying minds had already reached their destinations, Jürgen was carried along beneath the city. He put his hand to his mouth, and whispered in a human ear: "Everything runs and scurries, to and fro, across and across, all day and all year. Extraordinary and significant! Banks shoot up. New floors are added to them; little restaurants are rebuilt and become counting-houses. I tell you, this—this is the sign!" He raised his hand, like the policeman, warningly, as though to call attention to the approach of a terrific catastrophe.

The train roared upwards over the spans of an iron bridge. Jürgen was ejected on to the pavement, looked

round him. Trams, electric trains, suburban steam-trains crossed each other's paths; spat out crowds of human beings, sucked in more crowds.

With assumed casualness he told the busy hotel-porter that he was Jürgen Kolbenreier. "Here's my passport. See that it's in order."

"All right."

He filled in the necessary form and hopped about his room with delight because he had deceived the porter. "What others can do, I can do. I can assume the externals of an existence that doesn't exist. I have simply to conduct myself with dignity, and not let anyone notice that I'm not real. For no one will give any information to a person who's non-existent. And I shall have to ask a great many people about myself, shall have to search for myself a long time, before I find myself."

He listened to the roar of the city. It sounded like the yelping of a million dogs that had gone mad with hunger.

And suddenly he had a clear glimpse of Jürgen walking slowly down a street, past a milliner's shop, and disappearing in a crowd. He could not determine whether he had seen that street and that milliner's shop in Paris, Rome or Berlin.

"There are so many, many streets and so many milliners' shops in the world." Discouraged, he sank into a chair.

"I wonder what he's thinking now. What is he feeling at this moment?" Jürgen took out his watch. "When I find him, I'll ask him what he was thinking at this moment, at a quarter to six. Oh, how wonderful it would be just to know what I'm thinking at this moment! . . . A man thinks. What an incomprehensible miracle thought is! . . . What a pity he disappeared again so quickly! He'll be hard to find. I must think out a system. A scheme. I must act methodically."

Deliberately he assumed a mask of casualness and self-confidence, and walked over to the bell. And yet when the waiter came he turned away his face and rummaged in his trunk, as he said: "Bring me a map of Berlin. . . . You can bring me a ham sandwich, too, if you like."

"Splendid! I did that splendidly. If a man can eat a ham sandwich he must exist. That's obvious. 'You can bring me a ham sandwich, too, if you like.' Splendid! That 'if you like' was a masterly touch!"

And when the waiter came back with the map and a sausage-roll, for no ham was available, Jürgen pretended to be annoyed. "I wanted ham. Well, sausage will do." The waiter turned to go.

"One minute!" He cut off a piece of the roll and put it in his mouth while the waiter watched him. "What's the population of Berlin? I happen to be looking for someone," he said, chewing energetically, while the waiter looked on. "That's why I wanted the map of Berlin. By the way, this sausage is very good. Very good! . . . And to-morrow I want some warm milk and a roll for breakfast. Just a little warm milk! I have a rather weak stomach."

"Very well done! Admirable! 'Just a little warm milk.' 'I have a rather weak stomach.'" He hopped up and down. "I shall manage it. I shall manage it."

He studied the map intently, drew lines, in blue pencil, from Schmargendorf to Wilmersdorf, through Charlottenburg to Rixdorf, scored the paper with an 'i' before the 'e' of Steglitz. He tittered: "Stieglitz." He trilled like a *stieglitz*, a goldfinch. He was still trilling as he lay in bed, and trilled himself cheerfully and hopefully to sleep.

As he woke in the morning, he cried: "Ha-ha-ha, a weak stomach! Oh, if only I had a weak stomach! A

tumour of the stomach, agonising, dangerous ! At least it would be a stomach."

He hastily swallowed the warm milk, and his eyes opened wide with astonishment as he placed the empty cup on the table. " I've just drunk some milk ! I ! Just drunk some milk. A man's drunk some milk. So the man must have a stomach, must be a man, must exist."

He smiled a sly smile of self-approval, as though he had seen through a particularly well-planned deception. " So I have actually succeeded in deceiving myself into thinking I have a stomach. Wonderful ! No one can possibly notice that I don't exist."

He carried the empty cup slowly and carefully to the slop-pail, taking care not to spill a drop, emptied out the milk that was not there, listened to the splash. Then he pulled himself together. " Now I must start ! "

It was just seven o'clock. The air in the streets was fresh and invigorating. Jürgen was in a great hurry. He sprang on to suburban trains as they were about to steam out, was deposited by the Underground in the west of Berlin, carried by a tram right across the city to the north, and borne back on the top of an omnibus to Wilmersdorf.

He did not use his scheme. For whenever he wished to proceed methodically, the fear assailed him that while he was looking for Jürgen in the east of Berlin, his quarry might be in the west. He inquired of many people, as they hurried past, whether they could tell him where Jürgen Kolbenreihner was staying.

" The lecturer ? Oh, the wine restaurant with a bar ? "

" No, a very distant acquaintance of mine."

" And you expect me to know where he is ? Are you mad ? "

" Yes."

" Impudence ! " The man hurried on angrily.

After submitting to much foolish questioning from a burly porter sitting on a little bench, Jürgen said: "Perhaps he's in Odessa."

"Well then, off you go to Odessa."

"Perhaps you can tell me——"

"I've no time!"

"He has—no—time." Sadly he looked after the swinging hands that seemed to shovel the street back behind them.

Hurrying pedestrians directed him here and there, shouted at him, left him standing; pleasure-seekers laughed at him. He wandered through restaurants, cafés, churches, stores, little workmen's restaurants; he was refused admittance to the Reichstag building, and thrown out of an automatic restaurant, because instead of sticking the metal disc in the slot, he stuck it in the mouth of an astonished waiter. After a long journey he arrived at the Municipal Inquiry Office, but only to find it shut. At two o'clock he was standing, first in the queue, at the little window. He was given a form to fill up. He inhaled the smell of dust and paper, and thought: It smells like our book-keeping department. Trembling with expectancy, he handed the form to the official.

Who went on talking to his colleague, abusing the bad lighting. Suddenly he stopped, and looked as though he were thinking.

At every second of their lives people are thinking something. Except me. . . . "What are you thinking now?"

"Nothing," admitted the official mechanically. Then, with a look of surprise, he began to look for something.

"Is he registered here?" asked Jürgen eagerly. "Kolbenreiher with an 'h'."

The official made no answer. He was talking to his colleague about a carpet-shop in the north of Berlin,

which gave a ten per cent discount to members of the Municipal Workers' Union; he wished to know whether he could obtain this discount if he bought two ordinary bedroom mats. "If not, I'd rather have rush-mats; they cost less than half."

"And last for about a fortnight."

"Have you found any particulars about him?" Jürgen stuck his head and shoulders through the little square window.

"You have to take your shoes off to step on them. . . . Well, if you get up early——"

"Is he registered here?"

"— you don't wear any shoes in Berlin. . . . No, there's no Jürgen Kolbenreihner registered here." The shutter slammed down an inch in front of Jürgen's face.

Perhaps he's living here without troubling to register. I should be the last to know whether he's capable of such a thing.

He was in the busy street again, standing there devoid of feeling and sensation, like an object frozen to ice, that stands in the living, burning sunshine, and does not melt.

In all the human faces that moved past him, up the street and down, the same look of fixed, icy loneliness was printed, whether they were speaking or silent, laughing or thinking.

As immutably solitary, thought Jürgen, as a fly that darts on its zigzag course through the air with its big head in front of it. He bent down, suddenly touched by a marvellous sense of melancholy, to two little children who were squatting on the circle of earth beneath a tree, all the fulness of life in their eyes, absorbed in playing with some little stones.

And in ten years will come a great, vital, painful yearn-

ing ; in another ten years a dead, grey loneliness, for then the yearning will have passed for them, as for others.

His own yearning had been revived by the sight of the two children, bound together in play in the stream of life ; it drove him up and down the street.

“ Yes, he lives over there in the yellow house.”

His heart stopped beating. For a second it stood still. Then it began to hammer wildly. His temples grew grey and cold and seemed to rise above the level of his head. The terror of death seized and filled him, as he thought of looking into the eyes of him he had sold and betrayed.

Trembling in every part of his body, he was sure he would fall dead on the spot, the moment he stood face to face with the other. But a sense of being prepared for the uttermost streamed through his limbs, dissolving, blissful, and carried him to the enamel plate outside the door of the yellow house.

He sank, sank, sank. At last he was standing, with leaden legs and feet, on the pavement, reading over and over a name that merely resembled Kolbenreiher.

All his vitality, the whole weight of his body, seemed to have passed into his legs, so heavy were they, as he dragged himself along, his eyes dead and exhausted.

He reached the detective's office just before closing time. At the first glance, the proprietor sized up his well-dressed client's position ; in ten seconds he had realised that the man he had to find was standing in front of him, and had asked for a payment on account. That morning, to Jürgen's great surprise, a cheque for a large sum, signed with the name of Jürgen Kolbenreiher, had been cashed without question by the bank. “ Have you any hope ? ”

“ Of course I have. We have to live on hope these days. . . . What do you think of a special reward, Herr— Excuse me, what's your name ? ”

Jürgen shook his head. "I haven't one."

"You don't want to tell me. I quite understand. That often happens in our work.—A special reward, which you would pay to any man on my staff who discovers where this scoundrel is."

"He's not a scoundrel. On the contrary, we're scoundrels!"

"Excuse me! My clients are generally highly respectable people who want me to find some scoundrel or other."

"Believe me, it's just the other way about."

"What does this Herr Jürgen Kolbenreiherr look like exactly? I mean his main features. . . . You're living in a hotel, are you not?"

"I've given a false name at the hotel. The name of the man I'm looking for. You understand?"

"Oh, I understand."

"You see I am—oh no, I'm not. That is, I was going to say, I'm here incognito, quite incognito. . . . No one in the world can tell you what Jürgen Kolbenreiherr looks like now. For it's quite impossible to know how I should look if I had become what I am. That's the hopeless part of it."

"Nothing is hopeless. I've managed to clear up harder cases than yours. Calm yourself. Don't get excited. I'll handle the case myself. And as for that special reward, that will be payable when you admit, yourself, that this man you are looking for, Jürgen Kolbenreiherr, has been found. What sum would——?"

"Any sum you like. My villa, three blocks of tenements, a huge fortune in investments. Take all I have and give me him in exchange."

Jürgen was conducted to the door. He left the office with as much hope in his heart as the detective, who,

deeply sunk in reflection, scratched a drop of gravy from the silk lapel of his coat. His mind was so full of the villa, the blocks of tenements and the huge^e fortune, that he had no inclination to go on with a case of a servant girl's alimony.

Jürgen was standing in front of a hoarding on which was posted a red bill, with the words: *All shall be as you wish if you will only come home.* He took a taxicab to the printer's.

"The more thousands of bills you print, the greater the probability of finding this Herr Kolbenreiherr." The printer let his eyebrows sink to their normal level. "That's clear, isn't it?"

"Five thousand? . . . Twenty thousand?"

"Twenty thousand are better than ten. Now give me an exact description."

"It can't be done." He took a faded photograph from his pocket. "Here is a photograph of the man. My own photograph, taken years ago! But Jürgen Kolbenreiherr can't possibly look like that now. Neither can he look like this." And he pointed to his face.

"Didn't you say just now that you were Jürgen Kolbenreiherr?"

"I was. And I shall be again when I've found him."

"Listen. I don't take money from loonies. No, I'm not a pickpocket. I don't need to be. . . . Take hold of your head and say to yourself: 'This is me.'"

"If only it were as simple as that! If only I had a head!"

"Then off to the padded cell with you!"

A rival firm accepted the job. Next day every hoarding announced the reward that would be paid to anyone giving information as to the whereabouts of Jürgen Kolbenreiherr. On the flaming red bills was Jürgen's photograph, specially

taken for the purpose. The printer had said that a photograph would certainly give some sort of clue.

All day long Jürgen searched the town. No one recognised him. The detective made an effort to earn the reward. He brought with him a mental specialist to the hotel.

Jürgen showed them both the old photograph of himself. "Assume that this man had followed the path he knew it to be his duty to follow, and had grown fourteen years older; what would he look like now? Certainly not like me. . . . Find the right man and I'll pay."

"I've brought with me the man you want. He'll make it clear to you pretty quick that you, yourself, are the man you're looking for," said the detective firmly. "Isn't that right, doctor?"

The doctor grinned. "It won't be as simple as that."

The detective became self-assertive. "You must be examined." The doctor took out his watch. "First let me feel your pulse."

"Pulse! My pulse? Are you out of your senses? If only I had a pulse!"

"Come on!" cried the detective, and advanced towards Jürgen, who stepped back, taking up a bronze figure from the writing-desk.

Half an hour later, when the psychiatrist returned with two warders and a policeman, Jürgen had moved to another hotel.

On the strength of a statement made by the doctor, a force of policemen was sent out to search the hotels, pensions and boarding-houses for the lunatic, while Jürgen traversed the town full of hope, looking for himself.

"Do you know a Herr Jürgen Kolbenreier? He may have a moustache, but of course I can't tell you that."

The man he addressed asked in return: "Excuse me,

are you a detective? The police were at my hotel to-day looking for an escaped lunatic named Kolbenreihcr. A large force of police are searching for him all over Berlin."

"A large force? . . . Wonderful! Then they're sure to find me!"

Full of confidence, he whistled as he walked with a springy tread towards the little hotel where he had spent the previous night. The pedestrians, as they rushed past, the policemen, the chauffeurs, all the peering pairs of eyes, everyone in the world was looking for him.

Again he saw in front of him a woman who seemed to be crushed by an invisible burden. He had met her that morning, and again towards night, almost at the same spot, but he had not dared to address her or to inquire about himself, because of the frozen hopelessness of her face.

The woman had lost her life's companion two days before; her eyes and movements seemed disembodied. For two days she had been walking aimlessly round and round the same block of houses, carrying with her a burden of hopeless loneliness.

He feared that her poor heart would be too dead to give or receive; and this prevented him once more from inquiring of her hopelessness, after he had inquired in vain of all those optimistic, purposeful ones.

Just for a fraction of a second she saw Jürgen's frightened eyes resting upon her. She uttered a moaning sob. Repeated it three times. Then her face regained its rigidity, and she carried her hopeless loneliness slowly down the street.

Outside the hotel the porter was chatting with a policeman. Jürgen recoiled and stopped, moving his forefinger to and fro in front of his chest, in sign of negation. He raised his brows, whistled a single note and turned away.

"They're looking for me, the false Jürgen, the usurper, the cheque-forgery, the man who gave the name of Kolbenreier at the hotel. They're seeking the nothing that presumes to be."

Fear lest he should be arrested and locked up, and thus prevented from continuing his search, drove him forth. He did not dare to go to another hotel. He did not dare to show himself anywhere. Of a sudden there seemed to be no further possibility of finding himself.

"Hemmed in! I must sleep out of doors. Hemmed in!"

He felt a last vestige of hope that the hopeless woman might be able to help him, and this drove him after her down the street that led to the Tiergarten. His face was contorted with fear and suspicion. He showed his teeth.

His body sank on to the first bench he came to; it stood on the bank of the Spree Canal. The lonely woman beside him made no movement. She was not afraid. She looked with a fixed, unseeing glance at life, as it passed on, trampling over her. Two suburban trains, shining lines of light, moved past each other through the night.

She saw the death-chamber, where the man with whom she had passed a lifetime, filled with the struggles and sorrows of life, was still lying on the bed, covered to the chin with a white cloth.

By the tone of the first word she spoke, Jürgen felt that fate was sitting beside him.

Life was moving gently at their feet; the water was lapping on the wall.

She raised a feeble hand. She said in a quivering, warning voice, harsh with tears, as though she were uttering a warning to every individual on earth: "A hard word can never be recalled."

His heart was suddenly unlocked. Painfully moved

by the nobility and greatness of this destined suffering and hopelessness, he touched the lonely woman's shoulder.

At once she broke into a moaning cry. "He died so early, because he was too good for this world. Too good!" She rose heavily to her feet. "Too much, too much has happened to me." And went. The darkness took her.

A barge anchored before him, as he sat motionless, listening with painful emotion to the dying steps. It anchored by the little iron bridge over the canal. Under the signal-lamp at the bow, a young terrier was standing, looking round attentively. And, as on the evening when he came from Katharina's room and walked towards the town with the nine district leaders, a cool smell of tar floated towards him, and through the tops of the trees the lights of the town were shimmering.

Relieved by a deep sense of compassion, which had enabled him to put aside his own troubles, and strengthened further by the rich memory of that scene, Jürgen felt a yearning for Katharina arise with lightning quickness within him, and that bright yearning brought with it a sense of physical existence, as though it had never left him.

So mighty was his joy that he had no power even to utter a shout of triumph. A mild softness opened within him. Tears forced themselves between his lids. Hope entered his heart with power.

"Doggie," he whispered gently, and beckoned with his thumb and finger.

The dog got up, wagged its stumpy tail, ran, whimpering trustfully, up and down the edge of the barge. It stopped, looked at him, gave one bark of entreaty. All round was stillness.

"A dog, the stars in the sky. That is too much and too little for a man. Too little and too much! A man

suffers. . . . He must learn in suffering and he must struggle," said Jürgen. It was like a vow.

Without haste and without loitering, he walked into the city, to the station. And took the next train to his native town. His hair was grey, the flesh had fallen away from his face and body.

A few days after his return—Herr Wagner and three doctors had been to see him—the papers announced that Herr Kolbenreier, the partner in the well-known firm of bankers (whose head office, considerably enlarged, would be reopened in a few days' time) was suffering from inflammation of the nerves, a result of his indefatigable and unselfish labours. The disorder was very painful, but in view of the patient's vigorous constitution, his medical advisers believed that quiet and fresh air would soon restore him to health, so that Herr Kolbenreier would shortly be able to place his valuable services once more at the disposal of the firm.

Jürgen read this notice. He was interested only in the word "constitution." He asked Phinchen whether she believed him a constitutional scoundrel or a scoundrel by his own free choice, that was to say, a scoundrel responsible for his own treachery, who would have had the strength not to be a scoundrel at all. He stood in the kitchen doorway and looked intently at her bewildered and questioning face. "What do you think, Phinchen?"

Without taking her eyes from him, Phinchen dropped the dish-cloth and wiped her violet hands on her apron, as was her custom whenever Jürgen entered the kitchen. In her anxiety for her sick master, she said he had always been the best man in the world, and had certainly never intentionally done anything wrong.

At that he grew excited. "If that were true, there would be no hope. How could I find my way out of this

desert of human depravity, if I had strayed into it through no fault of my own, through no action on my part? . . . But you can't know that. You were sixteen—and now you are forty. You've spent your life in this kitchen."

For weeks Jürgen never left the house. He did not trouble to dress himself; ate and slept whenever the mood took him. Sometimes he turned to Phinchen with a question; and she answered as her heart directed.

His longings and broodings always revolved round the same point. There was nothing in the world except him and a tower of armour-plate; and before this tower he brooded, sitting and standing, lying and kneeling—a vault of armour-plate within him, to which he sought entry and could not find it.

Obstinate, tormented, but undiscouraged, he attacked his problem afresh every day and every night. Madness accompanied him in every thought, at every step. And on the table lay a revolver.

He had already acquired the capacity to observe himself in daydreams and even in the deepest dreams of night. As he strode in his dreams with a firm step through the darkness of subterranean vaults, he met the other, whom he was seeking, and held with him sad and whispered converse. In the other's eyes was a readiness beyond desire. "Go and measure!"

"Yes, measure! I will measure. That is the way." He sat up in bed, looked at the wardrobe door. "Measure?"

He lived so exclusively in his task, that, in spite of having interrupted his dream, he succeeded in dreaming its continuation, in getting back to the vaults that lay deep beneath life, in standing face to face again with the other, who looked at him inexorably, without desire.

Jürgen knew that he might not ask what it was he had to

measure; and when, none the less, he whispered the question, the face vanished. Senseless forms shot up and sank back into the night. Bunches of lights hissed away into the darkness, from which at every second new light shot forth.

Then a great fountain of light soared up, painfully brilliant, and in its centre lived the essential thing, in unearthly brightness; he shuddered to his very marrow, for suddenly he had possessed it.

He tried passionately to save his knowledge of the essential thing and bring it over out of half-sleep into wakefulness. Repeatedly, and with the utmost caution, he opened his eyelids, just an eighth of an inch. But every time the essential thing had gone, and nothing was there but the wardrobe door.

And as he sat upright in bed, wide awake, he knew no longer when, or how, or by whom, he had been counselled to make a pilgrimage through humanity, as he had done once before, in his youth, with clear-seeing eyes.

"Then I shall get back to where I was before. Oh, deeper consciousness!" With a cry of joy and yearning he sprang from the bed.

He left the house prepared to endure all suffering, even death itself. In his pocket was a loaded revolver.

A Sunday morning opened before him. A red sunshade crossed the street. A class of boys marched past; ranged strictly in ranks of four, and led by the teacher. "Left! Right! Left! Right!"

"When the swords shine and the bullets fly——" . . .
"Left! Right!"

It was on the teacher that Jürgen saw the image for the first time; it hung on his back, stunted, shrivelled, dried up. "That is his self, born with him but now quite barren, without any reciprocal action on its bearer," he

whispered, and gave way to an impulse to approach the teacher. "You are making yourself an accessory to a terrible crime, and I can tell you why."

He shook the teacher and said, speaking into his shocked face: "A terrible crime! For you allow yourself to be used as a slayer of souls." The teacher recoiled, wrenched himself free, hurried after the class and brought the ranks back from confusion to order with the command: "Left! Right!"

Illumined by visionary lightning, Jürgen saw all the classes in all the boys' schools of Europe. They were on a vast plain, marching to and fro in strict order, under the command of their teachers. And suddenly a roar of guns broke out and they changed to regiments of infantry. Ceaselessly, the strangled souls rose from the solid, closed squares of pupils, and vanished with plaintive songs.

"Where?" asked Jürgen. "Where have they gone?" He stood still and remote, possessed by his vision, till three old gentlemen strolled into his field of sight. One was describing something to the others, justifying his own unfriendly behaviour. "It was a case for a little strength of character."

"But you have no character. What would happen if you lost your fortune, your position, your privileges and the respect of respectable people? Where would your character be then? Gentlemen, you are shells of character." And he pointed to the dried-up images, which moved away with the three men.

It was as though a hand led him through the many streets, and suddenly the prison stood before him, like a cry frozen into stone. The gloomy window-holes were covered with thick bars of iron.

There was a dark pressure in his breast, as Jürgen looked

at the complacent Sunday promenaders. "They go past with minds untouched." The whole mighty building was in his heart. .

And as he stood by the wall, he walked once more through the passages, passages that were in his heart, through the hall filled with cages of narrow-meshed wire, each separating a human being from other human beings.

Doggy ! The wrecked girl of seventeen beckoned with her thumb and finger. Katharina's dog piteously wagged the stump of its tail.

Once more a tortured sense of impotence pressed Jürgen's heart together.

A cell door opened. Katharina stood before him in her grey prison garb, and it was rendered less hideous by a tuck at the neck that was contrary to regulations. The small, firm mouth smiled happily.

Again a storm of love burst forth in Jürgen. Then Katharina looked at him coldly and indifferently ("I can be a girl in conflict with her environment, who by her contempt . . .")

Jürgen grasped at the air with both hands and staggered against the prison-wall; he looked imploringly at Katharina's look, and it said, without speech: "First take all the suffering on yourself again."

Two pairs of arms, from which dangled walking-sticks, rose up and fell thighwards. Shoulders were shrugged. Jürgen looked at their shrunken images. "They also are entirely de-individualised." And, moved by the interest of a sufferer for his fellow-sufferers, he followed the two men.

"I entirely agree with you, president," repeated the vice-president, and allowed the president to precede him into the club-room of the choral society, where the tables for the tenors and basses were already fully occupied.

Jürgen stood unnoticed behind a great tiled stove. The blows of the landlord's hammer, as he drove the bung into a beer-barrel, sounded from the bar through a closed door.

The president announced that he had summoned an extraordinary meeting of the society, because their highly respected foundation-member, Herr Simon Ott, was on the point of death. "He is lying at his last gasp."

"So we must practise the hymn in good time, so that we don't make a mess of it again when we sing it over his grave."

"But he's not dead yet!"

A little, dry, bespectacled master-shoemaker shot up from his seat and demanded a little more piety. He was the secretary.

"But he's still alive!"

"He can't last long, however, so I should be glad if the conductor would take the Hymn to the Departed." The president raised his arms: "Or are we to make a mess of it again?"

The vice-president rose and tapped on a beer glass: "I entirely agree with the president. . . . When an old member dies, a veteran of male-voice choirs, he has a right to demand that the hymn sung at his graveside shall have been properly rehearsed. And the honour of our society is not so strong that we can afford to make a mess of things, as we did last time."

The bespectacled cobbler was already giving out the song-books. The ten basses grouped themselves round the piano. "There is peace down there," intoned the conductor. And the basses began:

"In that cool place ——"

"Only the basses are to sing, if you please. Wait till your turn comes." The bespectacled cobbler had been humming his part. He was the first tenor.

*"The sleeper rests after life's long race,
And over the hill—zum, zum, zum, zum."*

"Softer! Not: zum, zum, zum, zum; but: zum, zum, zum, zum. . . . Gentlemen, you are not blow-flies; bees buzz much more softly."

Suddenly Jürgen saw forty pairs of eyes raised to the ceiling, forty mouths opened to the size of eggs, and on the singer's backs, as they stood in a semicircle round the piano, their forty, dried-up images.

Jürgen did not know how he had got there, and did not stop to ask himself the question: he was sitting on a bench in the park, opposite the green wooden fence, where, fourteen years ago, he had seen the black-coated Jürgen and accepted him as an ideal worth striving for.

His face brightened with a smile of profound certainty. He gave up his will and relaxed all his muscles, in an attempt to let his real desire, the man within, express itself, as he had done on the former occasion. He wanted to know what it was that the man within him wanted.

The wooden fence remained a wooden fence, empty of all else. "Not that! At least it doesn't want that," whispered Jürgen; "but what does it want, my heart?" He closed his eyes, listened and waited, and felt nothing. The lids of his inner eyes remained closed. He sat there motionless, painless, joyless, lifeless.

A faint wind moved the tree-tops. Sleepy chirping of a bird in the sunshine. The town surged in the distance.

"This is the white second," whispered Jürgen, with sudden emotion. For he saw himself walking. The streets grew narrower and gloomier, the houses smaller. Unbuilt stretches of land. The rotting wooden fence,

The little window hung near the ground and shone red in the darkness.

"The door is not quite shut. Oh, to go in, to go home, back to myself!"

A sudden explosion brought him to his feet. Two soldiers jerked their heads to the left; their hands flew to their caps; their staring eyes protruded from the sockets. They were saluting an officer.

"Go with them!" He went with them. He followed the officer to the municipal park, where a military band was playing and a crowd of people in their Sunday clothes were sauntering in the sun-dappled walks, beneath the foliage of old trees.

Many people greeted Jürgen respectfully, but he took no notice of them. For some time, he watched a youth, whose eyes were asking the great question of life, and who was looking at the smart business-men, the students, officers and officials, shyly, completely filled with a longing to be as smart as they, as confident and mature as they, to be able to stroll up and down, with a flower in his button-hole.

"Spit on that ambition," said Jürgen, smiling, and pointed to the sauntering crowd. "Then, instead of dying in emptiness, you may perhaps live in torment."

A group of students walked past him. Their arm-muscles were tense and their elbows turned outwards as they brought their red caps slowly down across their bodies as far as the knee, and then, with the same cramped, solemn movement, raised them to their heads again. Meanwhile a second group of students performed the same motion with their green caps, their scarred, beery faces turned rigidly sideways towards the red caps.

"Destruction to the system that brings forth such sons! Woe, they are the sons of their fathers! Woe, they will

become public prosecutors and judges! Are culture and the progress of humanity to be delivered to their heads and hearts? No, no, never! They will all become Jürgens! At best!" He laughed in self-disgust and self-contempt.

Then Katharina, the agitator, the metal-worker with the maimed hand, and the wood-worker, whose shrunken face was not much larger than a man's fist, came walking like something alien through the scattered, sauntering crowd. Their movements were those of persons who have come from somewhere and are going to somewhere.

A gigantic cloth, velvet-black, covered the whole sky. And when it grew twilight again, the leafy walks, the flower-beds, the band and the sauntering crowd piled up, revolving round and into each other. Jürgen no longer remembered whom he had seen.

Just in front of him, the students whose greeting he had just witnessed met again, and since possibly another student had joined one or other group who had not been there on the first occasion, they carried their hats down their chests again, with faces turned rigidly sideways.

With one sudden leap Jürgen sprang among them, gathered together, with one great motion of his hand, the whole crowd into one person, and began to bellow in uncontrolled fury.

Some time had passed. He did not know how he came to be standing outside the church. The surging notes of the organ accompanied the worshippers through the door, and they clustered round him. Then he remembered the details of the uproar he had caused with his speech.

At sight of the churchgoers he bared his teeth with hatred and hostility. "One and the same face, both there and here, worlds away from the deeper consciousness, which has grown powerless and degenerate."

The members of all the choral societies of Europe were standing singing in his brain ; behind his forehead all the classes of boys were painfully metamorphosed into regiments of infantry, round which the guns were thundering ; at the back of his head students were drinking and fighting and taking off their caps ; millions of the middle classes shrugged their shoulders indifferently, to the music of military bands and organs, spread out their arms regretfully, till Jürgen's temples threatened to burst.

He forced his way through the crowd, sprang through an entry and stood, twitching in every nerve, in an empty lane, where the sun never shone ; the walls were green with moisture.

"Down !" he snarled. "Down !" Both fists pressed to his temples. "Down ! Down with it all !"

It was as still in that damp lane as in an abyss. "But how ? By what power ? By what means ?"

Suddenly, as he stared at a strip of iridescent foam that welled out of the damp wall, he thought that, next second, the knowledge of the means would occur to him. He stood, both arms outspread, his hands pressed against the wall like one crucified, and listened and waited. The municipal park with its crowds of people opened before him. The whole scene was immediately covered by the velvet-black cloth. The effort of memory merged into a feeling of giddiness, from which rose a compulsion, as inevitable as when he had taken leave of Katharina at the cross-roads, to walk exactly ten times through the damp lane. Up and down.

"Eight," he counted, looked at where the sun was shining, clenched his fists in an effort to leave the lane before his time. Something spun him round. He marched back with drooping head.

A man was beating his wife in a basement flat, Wild

screams. The pale, tear-stained face of a little boy appeared at the iron-barred square of window, just above the ground. •

“And in twenty years the little boy will be beating his wife, and their son will be crying,” whispered Jürgen, and wandered for the tenth time through the mould-grey lane. “What power can hinder it?”

In the sunny square outside the church he went up to a man with a moustache, who evidently had no need to work. In his mouth was a thick, carefully coloured meerschaum cigar-holder. “Do you know? . . . Everything has its cause. If one can find out the cause, one can find the means. Don’t you think so, too?” And when the man shook his head:

“You’re a smoker, aren’t you? Nothing but a smoker? You could be designated by the term ‘smoker.’ You’re harmless. You do no harm to anyone.”

The man went on his way. A little cloud of smoke rose up and thinned away. Another little cloud followed it.

“Or are he, and the millions like him, beasts of prey? Self-righteous, satisfied beasts of prey, sure of their prey?”

A very old little man, who wore a military decoration hanging by a greasy ribbon to the greasy lapel of his coat, walked with short steps across the street. His desiccated image shared every little step he took.

“How could you endure to live for eighty years without ever being yourself for one second, without living your life for the space of one breath? . . . Only in childhood, in childhood! Do you still remember it?”

The little man raised his heavy head with difficulty: “Ay, ay, a sad life!” And walked on with short steps.

Daily, from early morning till far into the night, Jürgen observed and experienced life, searched the deeper consciousness and the way, accompanied by madness and a

revolver, and always prepared for a shot through the heart. In his struggle, which in a double sense was a struggle for existence, he was tossed to and fro for weeks between hope and despair.

"Where is the heart?" he once inquired of a doctor.

"Between the fourth and fifth rib, counting downwards."

And when he reached home, he felt for the place on his emaciated chest where the bullet would enter, determined not to live another second when all hope was gone.

He watched and listened to life, listening at the same time within himself. Resolved for life or death, he followed every sign the world gave him, spoke with children and old men, with soldiers and horses. The sight of a terrier that tried to run to Jürgen, but was dragged away by a woman, caused him to go at once to a dog-fancier's.

"Have you a terrier that will stand everything, except separation from the one person to whom he has given his affection?"

A young black dachshund was standing motionless in the sunny yard; suddenly it jumped into the air with all four feet at once, and then stood motionless again, its rolling eyes fixed on Jürgen.

"I haven't a terrier, but you can have that little devil cheap, with the lead thrown in."

"He's got nice eyes. Will he follow me?"

The motionless dachshund saw a fly, hopped towards it, stared up at the sky.

"He'll follow anybody."

Barking happily, the dachshund put his nose to the ground and dragged Jürgen out of the yard.

From that time Jürgen took long walks every day. He ignored rain and the heat of the sun, and never had a destination. For him there was only one destination, by day or night, whether he wandered or thought, slept or

dreamed. Everything and nothing was his signpost. He existed between his goal, that hung, a tiny, colourless point, ever at the same height above the horizon, his great hope, and that shot through the heart, which was to be his last liberation, his salvation from madness.

An old land-worker, bent double with a life of labour, touched his cap and pointed : " Your dog's after the game. If the forester gets him in front of his gun, he'll shoot him."

The head and hind quarters of the dachshund were bobbing up alternately in a field of deep clover, as it jumped over the clover-tops and, on landing, sank in deeply with its forelegs. It looked like a fleeing kangaroo. Jürgen listened to its sharp, desperate barks.

And then it happened that Jürgen, to whom every second of time was priceless ; who would not, for any prize that life could offer, have wasted one second in his search for himself ; Jürgen interrupted his great quest for life and death in order to find his dog.

" What is man ? What is the inner meaning that moves him ? Who can tell why the deepest sense of human life is to be found in sacrifice ? " whispered Jürgen, when he was once more on the path, and he began to weep, loudly and uncontrollably, in a sudden, wonderful liberation.

The dog trotted beside the sobbing man, up the hill to the edge of the forest. In front of Jürgen lay the vale, boundlessly broad and deep.

Innumerable young people—girls with restrained, questioning glances, schoolboys, students of all nations, stood crowded together, waiting for the word. Procession after procession, endless, moved out of the woods, appeared behind the farthest chains of hills. On the shoulders of each one cowered a sinister and evil-looking beast. All eyes were fixed on Jürgen.

“ Do not follow your fathers, the old money-grabbers ! ”

At that the beasts reared up, showed their teeth ; the hair rose on their backs ; they struck their claws into the shoulders of the groaning youths, uttered fearsome cries which brought fright and impotence into the looks and faces of the youths.

“ Throw them down from your shoulders ! Tear them out of your hearts ! . . . Cause trouble to your good mothers ! Recognise your task and then fulfil it ! Unless you do that, you will be ruined in one way or another.” Thus Jürgen began his great exhortation to youth, and it grew into a description of his life, and rose over and over again to a warning against doing as he had done.

Some hours later, Jürgen was sitting at the window of the little café, with a steaming glass of mulled wine in front of him. He looked over, darkly questioning, at the premises of the button-exporter, not knowing how and when and why he had come there.

After his return to his native town, it had repeatedly happened that, as he wandered about the town or its environs, he had unexpectedly found himself in places which some past experience had made significant for him.

A man stands by the black mouth of a tunnel, full of a sense of having stood outside that tunnel in a former existence. He sits on a milestone, pondering, withdrawn into life, and bush and tree, the quiet edge of the forest and the straight road, losing itself like a white arrow in the far horizon, are all mysteriously familiar to his uneasy heart.

The wall that impeded Jürgen's vision of the past moved silently away, and the memories burst upon him so suddenly and with such living force that Jürgen cried out, trying to shield himself from them ; cried out and trembled,

full of fear lest he should be crushed by their weight, annihilated by a lightning flash of consciousness.

He was stricken and permeated with life and joy. To save his mind from injury, he consciously tried to admit returning consciousness a little at a time. He tried to distract himself, to count exactly three hundred pine trees along the edge of the wood. Counted and counted. Trembled and sobbed and counted, harassed by consciousness that pressed after him from tree to tree, bringing with it a flood of agonisingly vital memories, which made up his great retrospect, deep back into the past.

Many days and nights had gone by, spent in a constant effort to defend himself, to keep his balance, before Jürgen felt ready and strong enough to seek out consciously the places he had known in the past. Again he spent a whole night in the thieves' restaurant, reading in those devastated faces what he had known before; and the knowledge of the treachery he had committed entered again into his soul. Again, heavy-hearted, he realised that in this life one must stand deep in struggle and suffering unless one is to stand deep in guilt.

The cross-roads, where he had taken leave of Katharina, gleamed and burned. He stood there a long time, hesitating. And suddenly he had crossed the road with flying haste, while shudders ran down his spine.

And step by step, with the return of his consciousness, life burst out afresh in him, in all its millionfold variety. Life, life which a man must accept and understand in a human span. It burst forth in waves of such might that he trembled like one risen from the grave, trembled as he looked on sun and sky, listened to sounds, watched the petty life of the streets, the heavy horses loyally drawing loads of bricks towards a building, the sparrows hopping on the pavement, pecking in the cracks.

Jürgen walked away from the town, holding the dachshund on a lead, along the wall of the quay, past a row of working-women, who were kneeling on the bank, washing bright-coloured clothes, past drenched children, who were building harbours with sand and mud.

The last houses fell behind him. The river glided, blue and green, along the soft chain of hills. At the end of the quay a fisherman was standing. Jürgen walked up to him as in a dream. He was not surprised. "Are you Herr Knipp?"

"That's my name." On the bank behind Herr Knipp lay a reserve fishing-rod; it was a particularly long one, of the very latest pattern. He had also bought himself a new rucksack of brown sail-cloth finished off in leather, and a folding-stool. The angler was now fifty-eight, but as he stood there, content with himself and the world, he seemed completely unaltered, as though not a day had passed since Jürgen last saw him.

Once more Jürgen sat down with his legs dangling over the water. Millions of tiny gnats hung in the hot, oppressive air above the surface of the river. The town throbbed near by. Time stood still and glided backwards.

"Do you remember that consumptive who was out of a job? I once sat and talked to him here."

Herr Knipp calmly lifted his line from the water and threw it with a graceful sweep back into the gurgling stream. "They're biting well to-day; there's a storm coming up. . . . That fellow's been dead a long time. He was discontented. Eaten up with restlessness and dissatisfaction with the world. At last he stole something, went to prison, and died there."

If a man is drowsy with too much sleep, he determines a dozen times over to get out of bed, and each time stays where he is. Suddenly his feet are on the floor. Many

things combine in his mind to cause this sudden action, without his realising clearly what they were; in the same way Jürgen's journey with the agitator to the meeting at Paradise Hall suddenly came back to his mind. The five thousand faces, the pale face of the consumptive, Katharina's cry of "*Liberty*," all his own sensations and thoughts came vaguely and unbidden into his memory. But all these recollections, combined with the words of Herr Knipp, caused Jürgen suddenly to spring to his feet, firmly convinced that his attention had been concentrated long enough upon himself.

A restlessness quite distinct from that which had caused him to seek out that fisherman's haunt and revive its associations took hold of him, and he realised that knowledge and consciousness should not be sought and cultivated for their own sake.

"The time is fulfilled," said Jürgen, his heart heavy and joyous at once, as he strode purposefully forward.

The sky was cloudless and sunless; it looked sick. The landscape resembled a huge, lifeless painting. The dachshund hesitated, stopped, lay down in the middle of the road. The birds had vanished. Not a sound. Jürgen contemplated a field of corn. The stems were three feet high. The complete immobility of the stalks and ears impressed him as something weird and unnatural. Not till Jürgen had gone on far ahead did the dog rise from the ground.

A few drops of rain fell heavily through the windless air. The rain stopped, as though the sky were too limp and exhausted to let loose the storm. An animal close by cried three times in apprehension. And a second later a flash of dry lightning quivered across the whole valley.

All the ears began to move simultaneously, as though at a sign from a baton. The valley began to sing. Light-

nings, coming from the far distance, drew after them faint thunders. An apple tree shivered. A bit of old rag took one leap across the road, remained, while the gust lasted, spread firmly against the stems at the edge of the cornfield, and whisked away, brushing the ears as it passed.

Jürgen had not yet reached the hut in the middle of the field when the first thunderclap burst, accompanied by oblique masses of water. The dachshund sat at Jürgen's feet, barking at the cloud-burst.

Fields, wood and river, the whole valley vanished in the storm, and, when it appeared again, as though from nowhere, Jürgen walked with rapid steps towards a white unscalable wall. He wore a smile of freedom on his face.

The heavy wooden gate was thrown open, and a cab drove out. With a few hurried steps, Jürgen sprang through the gate into the lunatic asylum. The gate slammed to. "Take me to the doctor."

The doctor was still standing in the hall. He came hurrying up.

"You've been waiting a long time for me?"

"Oh no! That is, I'm very glad to see you, of course, Herr Kolbenreiher. . . . Don't excite yourself. Stay here. All you need is quiet," he cried encouragingly to Jürgen, who looked back at him with a steady smile.

The dachshund came racing up, sopping wet, dragging the lead behind it. It barked reproachfully at the closed gate, sat up on its haunches, its fore-paws upraised, and pressed its body against the wall, blinking discontentedly at the sky, which was still covered with blue-black clouds. Two peals of thunder followed in quick succession.

"What does it cost to stay in your institution, with full board?"

"That depends on the position of the room and the sort

of furniture. On the class, so to speak. We have three prices."

"Like the railway."

"We should charge you for lodging and, of course, the treatment also, as reasonably as possible. You want to get well again, and you will." The doctor quoted prices.

"And for a permanency?"

"That certainly cheapens the matter considerably."

"Then a permanency is best, is it not?"

"Very sensible of you."

"Don't you think so? . . . Are there many patients here?"

"Oh, we're full up. Very interesting people."

"And none of them quite right?"

"On the whole, that is more or less the case with all of them. . . . Come here, will you?" he called to the head warder.

"I wanted to see these high walls. I wanted to see them once from the inside, doctor. Thank you very much. Good-day, doctor," said Jurgen, and turning round, he walked out of the gate.

"Escaped!" On the bridge he took out the revolver and let it drop straight into the water. "Escaped!" In his shoulders he felt the life and strength for a new beginning.

Jürgen took the tram as far as the terminus, and a few minutes later reached the door. It was not quite shut.

"Oh, she's never at home," said Katharina's landlady. "It isn't like it used to be. Meetings every day! And then she has to go to the newspaper-office. The paper's published daily now; and when she does get home, she sits straight down and spends half the night at her typewriter. She has a lot to do now. She's writing a book, too. As thick as that! It's going to be printed."

A full bookcase occupied the length of one wall. The look of the room was improved by a carpet. A hand-bill lay on the table : an invitation to a mass meeting at Paradise Hall that evening.

Outside the hall, on the farther side of the street, two policemen were standing ; in the doorway three workmen were talking eagerly together, and beside a pile of pamphlets was standing a boy of fourteen. He walked up to Jürgen with a look of assurance. "*The Fight for Socialism !* "

Jürgen bought the pamphlet. "Who's speaking to-night ? "

"My mother, Comrade Lenz."

Stop ! Stop ! This is too much, too much happiness, too much happiness ! Trembling, he stared at Katharina's son, who looked exactly as Jürgen had looked when, as a high-school boy, he had stood outside a bookshop, lacking the courage to go in and buy a book.

Jürgen entered the hall with the three workmen, and softly closed the door. The voice of Katharina sounded from far away through the stillness.

